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THE ASCENDANCY OF FRANCE

1598-1715

BY

HENRY OFFLEY WAKEMAN, M.A.

LATE FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE

AND TUTOR OF KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD

AUTHOR OF 'AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND'

PERIOD V

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PREFACE

I have not attempted in the following pages to write the history of Europe in the seventeenth century in detail. The chronicle of events can be found without difficulty in many other works. I have therefore endeavoured as far as possible to fix attention upon those events only which had permanent results, and upon those persons only whose life and character profoundly influenced those results. Other events and other persons I have merely referred to in passing, or left out of account altogether, such as for instance the history of Portugal and the Papacy, the internal affairs of Spain, Italy, and Russia. Following out this line of thought I have naturally found in the development of France the central fact of the period which gives unity to the whole. Round that development, and in relation to it, most of the other nations of Europe fall into their appropriate positions, and play their parts in the drama of the world's progress. Such a method of reading the history of a complicated period may, of course, be open to objection from the point of view of absolute historical truth. The effort to give unity to a period of history may easily fall into the inaccuracy of exaggeration. The picture may become a caricature, or so strong a light may be shed on one part as to throw the rest into disproportionate gloom. It would be presumptuous in me to claim that I have avoided such

dangers. All that I can say is, that they have been present to my mind continually as I was writing, and that I have been emboldened to face them both by the fact that the history of the seventeenth century lends itself in a very marked way to such a treatment, and by the conviction that it is far more important to the training of the human mind, and the true interests of historical truth that a beginner should learn the place which a period occupies in the story of the world than have an accurate knowledge of the smaller details of its history. To know the meaning and results of the Counter-Reformation is some education, to know the official and personal names of the Popes none at all.

With regard to the spelling of names I have endeavoured to follow what I humbly conceive to be the only reasonable and consistent rule, that of custom. It seems to me to be as pedantic to write Henri, Karl, or Friedrich, as it is admitted to be to write Wien or Napoli, and inconsistent on any theory except that of the law of custom to write anything else. But with regard to some names, custom permits more than one form of spelling. It is as customary to write Trier as Trêves, or Mainz as Mayence. These cases mainly arise with reference to names of places which are situated on border lands, and are spelt sometimes according to one language, and sometimes according to another. In these cases I have followed the language of the nation which was dominant in the period of which I treat, and accordingly write Alsace, Lorraine, Basel, Köln, Saluzzo, etc. The use of an historical atlas is presumed throughout.

H. O. W.

All Souls College, Oxford.

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CHAPTER I

EUROPE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Importance of the century—France at the beginning of the century—The States-General, the Parlement de Paris, Religious Toleration—Germany—The Emperor, the Imperial Courts, the Diet—Disunion of Germany—England—Spain—Italy.

THE seventeenth century is the period when Europe, shattered in its political and religious ideas by the Reformation, reconstructed its political system upon the principle of territorialism under the rule of absolute monarchs. It opens with Henry IV., it closes with Peter the Great. It reaches its climax in Louis XIV. and the Great Elector. It is therefore the century in which the principal European States took the form, and acquired the position in Europe, which they have held more or less up to the present time. A century, in which France takes the lead in European affairs, and enters on a course of embittered rivalry with Germany, in which England assumes a position of first importance in the affairs of Europe, in which the Emperor, ousted from all effective control over German politics, finds the true centre of his power on the Danube, in which Prussia becomes the dominant state in north Germany, in which Russia begins to drive in the Turkish outposts on the Pruth and the Euxine—a century, in short, which saw the birth of the Franco-German Question and of the Eastern Question—cannot be said to be deficient in modern interest. The map of Europe at the close of the seventeenth shows the same

Importance of the Seventeenth Century.

great divisions as it does at the close of the nineteenth century, with the notable exception of Italy. Prussia and Russia have grown bigger, France and Turkey have grown smaller, the Empire has become definitely Austrian, but in all its main divisions the political map of Europe is practically unchanged. The states which were formed in the general reconstruction of Europe after the religious wars of the sixteenth century are the states of which modern Europe is now composed. Great nations are apt to change their forms of internal government much more often than they do their political boundaries and influence; but it is a remarkable thing that, with the great exception of France, the principal European states possess at the present time not only a similar political position, but a similar form of government to that which they possessed at the close of the seventeenth century. In spite of the wave of revolutionary principles, which flowed out from France over Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, the principal states of Europe at the present time are in all essentials absolute monarchies, and these monarchies are as absolute now as they were then, with the two exceptions of Italy, which did not then exist, and France, which is now a Republic, but has been everything in turn and nothing long. The formation of the modern European states system is therefore the main element of continuous interest and importance in the history of the seventeenth century, that is to say, the acquisition by the chief European states of the boundaries, which they have since substantially retained, the adoption by them of the form of government to which they have since adhered, and the assumption by them, relatively to the other states, of a position and influence in the affairs of Europe which they have since enjoyed. The sixteenth century saw the final dismemberment of medieval Europe, the seventeenth saw its reconstruction in the modern form in which we know it now.

Of the European nations which were profoundly affected by the Reformation, France was the first to emerge from the

conflict. French Calvinism differed from the south German type by being more distinctly political in its objects, and the leaders of the French Catholics, especially the ambitious chiefs of the house of Guise, had quite as keen a desire for their own aggrandisement as they had for the supremacy of their religion. The religious wars in France soon became mainly faction fights among the nobles for political objects in which personal rivalry was embittered by religious division, and all honest and law-abiding citizens—that sturdy middle-class element which has always formed the backbone of the French nation—soon longed for the strong hand which should at any rate keep faction quiet. The authority of the Crown had ever been in France the sole guarantee of order and of progress. Under the weak princes of the House of Valois that guarantee ceased to exist. Shifty, irresolute, inconstant, they preferred the arts of the intriguer to the policy of the statesman, the poniard of the assassin to the sword of the soldier, and when Henry III., the murderer of the Duke of Guise, in his turn fell murdered by the dagger of the monk Clément, France drew a long sigh of relief. Like England after Bosworth Field, France after Ivry was ready to throw herself at the feet of a conqueror who was strong enough to ensure peace and suppress faction. The House of Bourbon ascended the French throne upon the same unwritten conditions as the House of Tudor ascended the English throne. It was to rule because it knew how to rule, and the conditions of its rule were to be internal peace, and national consolidation.

The condition of France, 1598.

But the task before the first Bourbon was far more difficult than that which absorbed all the energies of the first Tudor. He had no machinery to his hand which he could use to veil the arbitrariness of his action, or to guide public opinion. Parliament in England had often been the terror of a weak king. The Tudors soon made it the tool of a strong king. In France Henry had to rely openly upon the powers of the Crown and upon military

The States-General.

force. It is true that the States-General still existed, though they were seldom summoned, but their constitution and traditions rendered them unfit to play the part of an English Parliament. They met in three houses representing the Clergy, the Nobility, and the Commonalty, the latter house, the Tiers-Etat as it was called, being usually about as large as the other two put together; but instead of there being a political division running through the three estates of those for the policy of the Crown and those against it, as was usually the case in England, the tendency in France always was for the two privileged houses to coalesce against the Tiers-Etat. The Crown had therefore only to balance one against the other, and leave them to entangle themselves in mutual rivalries in order to gain the victory. In the long history of the English Parliament it is very rare to find serious questions raised between the two houses. Nobles and Commons have as a rule acted together for weal or for woe in attacking or supporting the policy of the Crown. The unity of Parliament has been its most significant feature. In France it has been quite otherwise. Mutual jealousy and social rivalry played their part with such effect that they destroyed the political usefulness of the States-General. Unable to act together they could not extort from the Crown either the power over the purse, or the right of legislation, which were the two effective checks upon the king's prerogative exercised by the English Parliament. All that they could do was to present a list of grievances and ask for a remedy. They had no power whatever of compelling a favourable answer, much less of giving effect to it. The procedure was for each Estate to draw up its own list (*cahier*) of those matters which it wished to press upon the attention of the Crown. When the lists were completed they were formally presented to the king and a formal answer of acceptance or rejection was expected from him, but as the Estates separated directly the answer was given, the Crown was apt not to be over prompt in fulfilling its promises.

As a constitutional check upon misgovernment the States-General in France were therefore of little use. That function, as far as it was discharged at all, had by accident devolved upon the Parlement de Paris. The Parlement was in its origin nothing more than a court of law which sat at Paris to administer justice between the king and his subjects, and between subject and subject. In course of time it grew into a corporation of lawyers and judges, not altogether unlike our Inns of Court in England amalgamated into one, having just that kind of political influence which a close and learned corporation, whose business it was to make by judicial decision a great deal of the law of the country, could not fail to have. In one point indeed the Parlement had almost established a definite right. As the highest court of the realm its duty was to register the edicts of the king, a duty which was easily turned into a right to refuse to register them if it so willed. Thus the Parlement claimed an indirect veto upon the royal legislation. It is true that the king could always override the refusal of the Parlement to register an edict by coming in person to its session and holding what was called a *lit de justice*; but this was a proceeding which involved a good deal of inconvenience, and was not unlikely to excite tumults; it would not therefore be resorted to except on critical occasions. So completely had the constitution of France become in its structure despotic, that there was absolutely no constitutional means of exercising control over the king's will than this very doubtful right of the Parlement de Paris to refuse to register the king's edict. And if there was no constitutional check upon the king's will, there was also no machinery which the king could utilise in order to associate himself with his people in the task of government. He stood on a pedestal by himself in terrible isolation surrounded by his courtiers, faced by the nobility, backed by his army, unable to know his people's wants, and unable to help them to know their own.

The Parlement de Paris.

Position of the Crown.

But this was not all. Henry IV. had to encounter open enmity abroad, and give an earnest of religious peace at home, as well as to crush civil dissensions. It was not till his conversion to Catholicism drew the teeth of Spain, and proved to the majority of his subjects that he desired above all things to be a national and not a party king, that he can be said really to have reigned. The peace of Vervins, concluded in 1598, marked the issue of France from the throes of her Reformation wars. Her religious struggle was over. Calvinism had made its great effort to win religious and political ascendency in France, and had failed. France was to remain a Catholic country, and the bull of absolution granted to Henry IV. by Pope Clement VIII. in 1595 duly emphasised the return of the Most Christian King into the pale of Catholic obedience. But if Calvinism had failed, neither had Papalism wholly won the day. Catholic, France had determined to be, but she was far from assuming as yet the mantle of the champion of rigid orthodoxy just laid down by Philip II. The same year which saw the death of Philip II. and the real beginning of the reign of Henry IV. saw also the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes with its announcement of the new policy of liberty of conscience. By this famous edict religious toleration and political recognition was accorded to the French Calvinists. They were to be allowed to worship as they pleased, provided they paid tithes to the Church, and observed religious festivals like other Frenchmen. They were to receive a grant from the State in return. They were to be equally eligible with Catholics for all public offices. They were to be represented in the Parlements, and were to have exclusive political control for eight years over certain towns in the south and west of France, of which the most important were Nismes, Montauban, and La Rochelle. Thus they obtained not merely toleration as a religious body, and part endowment by the State, but also recognition in certain places as a political organisation. The political settlement

Religious toleration.

The Edict of Nantes.

was evidently but a palliative, the religious settlement was a cure. No country as patriotic as France, no government as strong as an absolute monarchy could tolerate longer than was necessary an *imperium in imperio* under the control of a religious sect. But the toleration of Calvinism in a country professedly Catholic was a solution of the religious question thoroughly acceptable to the genius of the French nation. It enabled France at once to fix her whole attention upon the absorbing business of political aggrandisement. It excused her somewhat for not thinking it obligatory to play a purely Catholic rôle in the pursuit of that aggrandisement. The first of those nations of Europe, which had been seriously affected by the Reformation, to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the problem of religious division, she was able to set an example to Europe of a policy entirely outside religious considerations. Under a king who had conformed, but had not been converted, France, pacified, but not yet united, was ready to mix herself up in the web of political intrigue and religious rivalry in which Germany was helplessly struggling, with the simple if selfish object of using the misfortunes of her neighbours for her own advantage.

The state of Germany was indeed pitiable. The Empire had become but the shadow of a great name. The successor of Augustus had nothing in common with his prototype but his title. Roman Emperor he might be in the language of ceremony, punctiliously might the imperial hierarchy of dignity be ordered according to the solemnities of the Golden Bull, but all the world knew that in spite of this wealth of tradition and of prescription, the Emperor could wield little more power in German politics than that which he derived from his hereditary dominions. The archduke of Austria must indeed be a figure in Germany under any circumstances, still more so if he happened to be also king of Hungary and king of Bohemia; but if the electors set the Imperial Crown at his feet and hailed him as Cæsar, though much was thereby added to his dignity and something to his legal rights, not one whit accrued to him of effective

Germany: The Emperor.

force. It is true that his legal position as head and judge over the princes accrued to him, not so much because he was emperor and the representative of Augustus and Charles the Great, as because he was German king and the successor of Henry the Fowler and Otto the Great. Nevertheless, the fact, from whatever quarter derived, that the German constitution gave to the Emperor the lordship over the other princes and the right of deciding disputes which arose between them, made him the only possible centre of German unity.

The Imperial Courts.

That right was exercised through a court (the *Reichskammergericht*) the members of which were mainly nominated by the princes themselves. For the purpose of ensuring the enforcement of its decrees, Germany was divided into circles, in which the princes and the representatives of the cities who were members of the diet met, and if necessary, raised troops to give effect to the sentences pronounced. Since the beginning of the Reformation, however, there had been a difficulty in getting this machinery to work owing to the religions dissensions, and the Emperor had begun the practice of referring imperial questions which had arisen to the Imperial or Aulic Council (*Reichshofrath*), which was entirely nominated by him and under his influence.

The Diet.

In all important matters of administrative policy the Emperors, since the middle of the fifteenth century, had been obliged to consult the Diet, but the Diet was in no sense a representative assembly of the classes of which the nation was composed, as were the Parliament of England and the States-General of France, but was merely a feudal assembly of the chief feudal vassals of the Empire. It was, in fact, a congress of petty sovereigns gathered under their suzerain. It was divided into three houses. The first consisted of six of the seven electors, three ecclesiastical, *i.e.* the archbishops of Köln, Mainz, and Trier, and three lay, the electors of Saxony and Brandenburg and the elector-palatine, for the fourth lay elector the king of Bohemia only appeared for an imperial election. The second was the House of Princes, the third that of the free Imperial Cities, but it was

considered so inferior to the other houses that it was only permitted to discuss matters which had already received their assent. It is obvious that in an assembly so constituted the only interest powerfully represented was that of the princes, and the only influence likely to be exercised by it was in favour of that desire for complete independence, which was natural to a body of rulers who already enjoyed most of the prerogatives of sovereignty. For there had ever been two divergent streams of tendency in German politics. Deep in the German heart lay a vague sense of nationality and patriotism, a dim desire that Germany should be one. This sentiment naturally centred round the Emperor as the visible head of German unity. If Germans ever were to be politically one, it could only be under the Emperor. There was no other possible head among the seething mass of jarring interests known geographically as Germany. The other tendency had sprung from the strong love of local independence characteristic of the Teutonic race. Naturally each petty duke or prince tried to become as independent of outside authority as he could, and in the pursuit of this policy he found himself greatly aided by that spirit of local seclusion, which ever seeks to find its centre of patriotism in the side eddies of provincial life, rather than in the broad stream of the national existence. The Emperors of the House of Habsburg had fully recognised these facts, and, since the days of Maximilian I., had set themselves resolutely to the task of rebuilding the imperial authority, and making the imperial institutions the true and only centre of German unity. They might have succeeded, had it not been for two events, the concurrent effect of which was completely to shatter the half begun work. The first was the Reformation, the second was the long rivalry with France. The Reformation cut Germany rudely at first into two afterwards into three pieces. Lutheranism, which absorbed nearly all northern Germany between the Main and the Baltic, drew its strength especially from the support of the north German princes. Luther him-

German desire for unity.

Desire for sovereignty among the Princes.

Effect of the Reformation.

self effected a closer alliance with the princes and the nobles than he did with the people. It was to them he appealed for protection in the days of his earlier struggles, on them that he trustfully leaned in the later days of his power. Naturally, therefore, Lutheranism gave a strong impulse and sanction to the desire, which the northern princes uniformly felt, to assert their independence of a Catholic emperor. Calvinism, spreading from republican Switzerland down the upper valley of the Rhine into the heart of Germany, had a no less fatal influence upon the centralising policy of the Emperors. Subversive in its tendencies and impatient of recognised authority, it intensified the spirit of dislike to autocratic institutions. Still, in spite of the terrible disruption of Germany caused by the Reformation, a sovereign so powerful and so cautious as Charles v. might have been able to weather the storm, without suffering any loss of prerogative or influence, had it not been for the constant and paramount necessity laid upon him of counteracting the machinations of an enemy ever wakeful and absolutely unscrupulous. As long as Francis I. lived Charles v. was never able seriously to apply himself to German affairs. When he was dead it was too late. The religious divisions of Germany had taken definite political shape, and were inspired with definite political ambitions. The Emperor had ceased to be the acknowledged political head of Germany. He had sunk into the inferior position of becoming merely the chief of one political and religious party.

Effect of the rivalry with France.

In this way the desire for political independence from the authority of the Emperor went hand in hand with the achievement of religious independence from the authority of the Church. The Emperors who followed Charles v. in the latter years of the sixteenth century, Ferdinand I., Maximilian II., and Rudolf II., so far from being able in the least to extend their prerogative in Germany, were barely able to retain what shreds of it yet remained. But towards the close of the century the onward and destructive march of Lutheranism and of Calvinism

Consequent disunion of Germany.

stopped. The Reformation spent itself as a living force. It had reached its utmost limits and slowly the tide began to turn. The Counter-Reformation, with the spiritual exercises of S. Ignatius in one hand and the sword in the other, went forth to win back half Germany to the faith. When the peace of Vervins set France free, Germany was at her weakest. Jarring interests, political dissensions, religious hatreds were rife through the length and breadth of that unhappy land. The Lutheran princes of the north had succeeded in throwing off the leadership of the Emperor without themselves producing either a leader or a policy. The Calvinist princes of the Rhine-land, exasperated by the advance of the Counter-Reformation, were ready to throw all Germany into the crucible and rashly strike for a supremacy which they had not strength to win. In Bohemia men remembered with fierce glee the stubborn waggon fortresses of the unconquerable Ziska, and the concessions wrung from reluctant Pope and Emperor by the success of a rebellion. Meanwhile in Bavaria and the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria, by steady governmental pressure backed by the devotion and talent of the Society of Jesus, Protestantism was being gradually rooted out and swept away by the advancing tide of the Counter-Reformation. Yet the Emperor himself was incapable of directing the policy of his own party. A melancholy recluse given to astrology and fond of morbid religious exercises, Rudolf II. was the last man fitted to lead a crusade. He could not even inspire respect, much less command allegiance. Never certainly was country in a more pitiable plight. Torn from end to end by religious dissension, pierced through and through by personal and provincial rivalries, without a single public man on either side sufficiently respected to command obedience, without unity of political or religious ideal even among the Protestants, without that last hope of expiring patriotism, the power of union in the face of the foreign aggressor, Germany at the close of the sixteenth century lay extended at the feet of her jealous rival, a helpless prey, whenever it pleased him to spring and put an end to her miseries.

England, unlike France and Germany, had as yet escaped the necessity of making the sword the arbiter of religion, but she had not wholly settled her religious difficulties. Elizabeth, masterful in all things, had imposed upon the Church and the nation a solution of the religious question which was still upon its trial. The experiment of a Church, historically organised and doctrinally Catholic, but in hostility to the Pope, was hitherto unknown in the West, though common enough in the East; and it is not surprising that it soon found itself attacked from both sides by Roman Catholics and Protestants at once. During the reign of Elizabeth the personality of the Queen and the success of her policy, especially as the champion and leader of the national opposition to Spain which culminated in the defeat of the Armada in 1588, kept the disturbing elements in check. On the accession in 1603 of a prince who with some insight into statesmanship was wholly deficient in the faculty of governing, those elements rapidly gathered strength. When serious constitutional questions between the king and the Parliament were added to the religious complications, England soon became too much absorbed in her own internal affairs to be able to speak with authority in European politics. For fifty years after the accession of the House of Stuart, England became merely a diplomatic voice in Europe to which nations courteously listened but paid no attention.

England.

While England was failing to secure her newly won honours, Spain was trading upon a past reputation. Never was the retribution of an impossible policy so quick in coming. The transition from Philip II. to Philip III. is the transition from a first-rate to a third-rate power, and that without the shock of a great defeat. Enervated by a proud laziness, drained by a world-wide ambition, ruined by a false economy, depleted by a fatal fanaticism, Spain was already falling fast into the slough from which she is only just beginning now to emerge. Yet she was still a great power, great in her traditions, great in her well-trained infantry,

Spain.

great through her monopoly of the American trade. Had she but produced men instead of puppets for kings, and statesmen instead of favourites for ministers, she would quickly have recovered something of her ancient glory. Even under Philip III. she was always a power with which men had to reckon, and in strict family alliance with the House of Habsburg formed the kernel of the Catholic interest in Europe. By her possessions in the Netherlands, in Franche Comté and in the Pyrenees, she presented the most serious obstacle to the territorial aggrandisement of France.

Patriotism was the very air the Spaniard breathed. In Italy it was a vice, for an Italian had no country for which to live or to die. Italy, since France and Spain had quarrelled over the division of its carcase, had ceased to be anything but a name. In the south, the Spanish House had made good its hold on Naples, in central Italy the States of the Church were thrust in like a great wedge to separate north and south. The north was still the battle-field between the rival powers. Venice lay entrenched along the eastern coast and commanded the mouth of the Brenner Pass, too formidable as yet to be attacked, too independent to be won, by either side. In the middle of the rich plain of Lombardy was the Milanese, which belonged to Spain, and was held by Austrian or Spanish troops, who kept up a precarious communication with Austria through the Valtelline and Tirol, or with Spain through the friendly republic of Genoa. To the west of the Milanese came Piedmont and Savoy, the duke of which from his geographical position was usually obliged to be on good terms with France, but respected the obligation no longer than necessary. Italy thus torn and divided was always ready to produce, whenever it was wanted, a crop of international questions of the greatest nicety for her neighbours to quarrel over, and, as the century advanced, she seemed more and more to find her appropriate function to lie in providing the necessary pawns for the game of diplomatic chess characteristic of the new European states' system.

Italy.

CHAPTER II

FRANCE UNDER HENRY IV.

Difficulties of Henry IV.—Henry IV. and Sully—Economical policy of Sully—His financial reforms—French taxation in the seventeenth century—Policy of Henry IV. towards the nobles—His foreign policy—Acquisition of Bresse and Bugey—The Cleves-Jülich question—Death of Henry IV.—Regency of Marie de Medicis—Mismanagement of affairs—The States-General of 1614—The Huguenot rising—Entry of Richelieu into the ministry.

'Now I am king!' cried Henry IV. when he received the submission of the last of the Leaguers. He was right, for it was only then that he was able to turn his attention to the true business of a king, the good government of his people. The evils under which France groaned were mainly threefold: the selfishness and factiousness of the nobility, the religious dissensions, and the shameful financial mismanagement. As long as civil and foreign war was desolating the country, no steps could be taken to deal with these dangers, but directly the submission of the League and the absolution of Henry had produced internal quiet, and the treaty of Vervins restored external peace, Henry found his hands free to strike at the root of the evil. Twenty days before the treaty was signed the publication of the Edict of Nantes found the true solution of the religious difficulty. It secured to the Calvinists the freedom of conscience for which they had nominally fought, to the Catholics the religious ascendency which their numbers and traditions entitled them to demand. Nor could the most zealous of Leaguers refuse to recognise

Difficulties of Henry IV. 1596.

the justice of a compromise which the Pope himself had sanctioned. The dangers which threatened France from the factiousness of the nobility and the disorder of the finances did not admit of so simple a remedy. They required long years of patient, watchful and firm government, and Henry IV. was not able in the time allotted him to do more than make a beginning and set an example. For this purpose he called to his intimate counsels his old comrade in arms, the duke of Sully, whom he had known and valued since childhood. The whole internal administration of the country was confided to him under the king, and the title of Superintendant of the Finances, which was conferred on him in 1598, gave him special authority in that department.

Henry IV. and Sully.

For the twelve remaining years of the reign of Henry these two men were continuously and inseparably engaged upon the great work of the rehabilitation of the affairs of France. The very contrast between them in temperament and talents served to bind them the closer together and fit them for their joint work. Henry himself was a true Gascon, frank, open-hearted, open-minded, genial, generous, and perhaps boastful. Sully was severe, harsh, cold and reserved. With Henry pleasure, even dissipation, had ever held a foremost place. Unhappy in his marriage he had solaced himself with many mistresses and a large family of bastards, and even after he became king the recklessness of his expenditure, and the extravagance of his orgies occasioned scandal even in pleasure-loving Paris. Sully, on the other hand, was morose in manner and thrifty even to meanness in private life. Avaricious, incorruptible, indefatigable, intensely jealous of his authority, and proud of his services, he found his pleasure in the rooting out of abuse and his triumph in the overthrow of the evil-doer. Henry inspired love and loyalty in his people, Sully won their respect and their hatred. Yet neither was complete without the other. To Henry, gay, chivalrous and manly, human nature was a book more easily read, a tool more deftly used. His mind was more inventive,

his heart more expansive, his conceptions far wider and deeper in their scope. In a word, he was a statesman, while Sully was an administrator, and France required the services of both. While Henry's clear genius cut the knot of the religious question, and seized unerringly the moment to throw France boldly on to the track of her political greatness, Sully's honest watchfulness was laying the foundations of economical resource, and purifying the streams of administrative policy, which alone could enable France to make the sacrifices necessary for the attainment of her political future.

Encouragement of agriculture.

The characteristic bent of Sully's mind is most evident in his economical measures. He looked upon France as an essentially agricultural country, and he believed further that an agricultural population was a far more trustworthy support to the Crown than one engaged in industrial pursuits. Consequently he devoted all his efforts to the development of agriculture. France was to be the great producer of food for Europe. By the draining of the marshes, and the careful management of the forest-land, large tracts hitherto unproductive were brought under cultivation, and the country soon began to supply food products more than sufficient for her own wants. The removal of all export-duties on corn enabled her to sell this surplus to less favoured nations at considerable profit, without rendering herself dependent upon others for any prime necessity of national existence. In this Sully showed himself a true exponent of the economical ideas of the seventeenth century. At a period when Europe was torn with religious and political dissensions, when France especially was preparing to launch herself upon a career of aggrandisement, which was to evoke a hundred years of war, it seemed all important to politicians that a country should not be dependent upon any other for the chief necessities of life. It was not so much a principle of economical policy as a necessity of national safety which drove nations to make themselves as self-supporting as possible in days of almost universal war. They

encouraged only such manufactures as were required by their own people, they prohibited the importation of foreign food products by high import-duties, they kept gold and silver as much as possible in the country, chiefly in order that the government might have ready to hand the means of waging war. It has been too much the fashion to look at the protective system of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from the economical side alone. Its foundations are laid far more in the interests of prudent national policy than in those of a false economy, though it is true that hardly any statesman of the time fully realised how false the economy was. Sully certainly was no exception to the general rule. While encouraging agriculture as much as possible he deliberately depreciated manufactures, imposed duties on manufactured articles, prohibited the exportation of gold and silver, and did all in his power to hinder the establishment of new industries. Here the greater statesmanship of the king corrected the prejudices of the minister. Henry at once perceived the political as well as the economical value of an industrial population and of national industries, encouraged the nascent silk manufactures of Lyons and Nismes, and the glass and pottery works of Paris and Nevers, promoted the construction of roads, and of the first of the great canals of France, that between the Loire and the Seine. In the department of foreign affairs, where the influence of Sully was less powerful, his efforts were even more observable. He renewed the extremely important capitulations with Turkey, which were the solid fruit of the alliance of Francis I. with the Sultan, and thus retained for France a predominant voice at the court of Constantinople and the larger share of the trade with that port. He made favourable treaties of commerce with England and Holland, which helped to encourage the exportation of French wines, and promoted the colonisation of Canada, where Champlain founded Quebec in 1608.

Partial encouragement of manufactures.

The greatest debt which France owed to Sully was the reform of the financial administration. It is a singular thing

that a nation which has shown itself in other departments of administration so persistent in its adherence to fixed principles, should have been content to manage the important department of finance at hap-hazard. From the time that France became a nation, to the time of the Revolution, she produced but four great finance ministers, Suger, Sully, Colbert, and Turgot, and of them the two most important, Sully and Colbert, were not so much great financiers as honest and sensible administrators. The business of Sully was to produce order out of chaos, to defeat corruption, to govern justly. He made no attempt to reorganise the finances of France, to introduce a new and better system of taxation, still less did he venture to interfere with privileges which rendered anything like a just incidence of taxation impossible. Nor indeed would he have wished to do so if he had dared. On the contrary he accepted the system as he found it, and contented himself with enforcing its proper observance. The only important novelty which he introduced was the tax known as the *paulette*, by which the judicial and financial officials were permitted to hand on their offices to their heirs on payment of the tax. This was in fact to create a caste of hereditary officials, and to add yet one more to the many privileged classes of France.

Financial reform.

The revenue of the country was chiefly drawn from four sources known as the *Taille*, the *Gabelle*, the *Aides*, and the *Douanes*. Of these, the *taille* was the most lucrative, and was originally a direct tax upon property. But in course of time its mode of assessment became varied in different parts of France. In the *pays d'election*, or those provinces which originally appertained to the monarchy of France, such as Normandy, Touraine, the Isle de France, etc., the *taille* was still a property tax and was levied upon each man personally according to a computation of what he was worth; but in the *pays d'état*, or those provinces which had been annexed to the crown of France in more recent times, many of which

French Revenue, the Taille.

had on annexation secured fiscal privileges which they had been accustomed to enjoy—such as Burgundy, Guienne, Provence, etc.—it was levied only upon land and was in fact a land tax and not a property tax. In the *pays d'election* the nobles, in the *pays d'etat* the *terres nobles*, i.e. the lands which were or once had been in the possession of the nobility, were free from *taille*, and so were the lands of the Church, which paid their tenths (*decimes*) instead. In itself there was nothing unjust about the *taille*, excepting the fact that as, owing to the exemptions, it fell almost entirely on the classes which had no political power, the temptation to increase it abnormally was a very strong one to a needy finance minister who was anxious not to make powerful enemies. But the real evil of the tax lay in the method of its assessment and collection in the *pays d'election*. The gross sum to be raised from each province was fixed by the government, and a contract made with a capitalist on the best terms available for the letting to him of the sole right of raising that sum from that particular province. The *Intendant*, the financial agent for the province, then proceeded to assess the total sum to be raised upon the different parishes, and the farmer general in his turn farmed out the raising of these smaller sums to subordinate agents of his own. Finally the inhabitants of each parish elected a committee to levy the parochial quota upon individuals. Nothing could well exceed the wastefulness and injustice of such a system. Every parish which had made or could make interest with the *Intendant*, every inhabitant who had interest with the assessment committee got the quota reduced at the expense of less fortunate neighbours. Each farmer and sub-farmer wrung the most he could out of an unfortunate peasantry, and was protected by a government which had already received all that was due to it of the tax. The only nominal check upon the farmers was the supervision of their accounts by the *chambre des comptes*, but that was a mere farce, as no attempt was made to ensure the accuracy of the registers upon which they worked. A

system by which it mattered not a *sou* to the government to see that the tax was fairly levied, while it was to the direct interest of the officials to take care that it was unfairly levied, stands self-condemned, but it was a system which was universal throughout France. By farming out the different branches of the revenue to harpies who fattened on the misery of the people, the government shirked the difficulty of having to deal with venal servants of its own, and reaped the benefit of a sure though diminished income at the price of abdicating one of the chief functions of government, and subjecting the innocent tax-payers to the worst form of governmental tyranny, a taxation both capricious and corrupt. When Sully turned his attention to the abuses of the system, it is said that the people were paying 200 millions of francs in taxes while the government received only 50 millions!

If the *taille* was the most lucrative tax, the *Gabelle* or salt tax was the most oppressive. Salt was a government monopoly farmed out to capitalists in the usual way, but the special grievance with regard to the tax did not lie in the fact that it was a monopoly, or that the quality of the government salt was bad, but in the assessment of the tax. The government laid down by decree the amount of salt which every Frenchman was supposed to require, or at any rate had to buy, and each household was assessed therefore at a sum representing the amount of salt legally consumable by the number of persons of whom it was composed. There is something ludicrous in the idea of a paternal government dictating to its children the amount of salt which is good for them, but there was little of a joke in it to the over-burdened French peasant, who was compelled to pay an extortionate sum for a far larger amount of an inferior commodity than he could possibly use or dispose of. The door was thus thrown open wide to corruption and to smuggling—those two ogres which ever prey upon a faulty fiscal system—but the abuse not only lasted until the Revolution but grew in intensity with increasing civilisation. In 1781, eight years before the Revolution

The Gabelle.

broke out, it was calculated that it cost 18 million *livres* a year to bring the treasury a revenue of 72 million *livres* from the *gabelle*; in other words, that a fourth of the produce of the tax was spent in collecting it, while the yearly convictions for smuggling amounted to between three and four thousand.

The *Aides* and the *Douanes*, which answered roughly to the modern excise and customs duties, were not open to such obvious objections, but they too played their part in helping to discourage trade and impoverish the people. Each province, almost each district of France, had its own internal customs, and levied a toll which was nearly prohibitive on the circulation of wealth. Each branch of indirect taxation was farmed out, and gave rise to a needy host of agents, inspectors, and tax-gatherers, who looked to make their fortune out of the necessities of the tax-payers. But this was not all. Besides the taxes authorised by government and paid directly or through farmers to the national exchequer, there were, when Sully took charge of the finances, many other payments of a most oppresive nature exacted from the people, which were in fact part of the terrible legacy of the long civil wars. Governors of provinces and commandants of garrisons levied what they considered necessary for the maintenance of the troops, without any authorisation from the treasury, and without rendering any account of the sums so raised. Many of the nobles whose assistance or whose neutrality Henry had found it prudent to buy, received their gratifications in the form of charges upon the revenue arising from certain districts, and, as there was no check exercised by the government over the amounts raised, they frequently levied upon the wretched people three or four times the sum originally due.

The Aides and Douanes.

Military requisitions and charges upon revenue.

A system so badly conceived and so iniquitously administered as this was calculated both to impoverish the people and to dry up the sources of wealth. Sully did not attempt to deal with the larger problem except by encouraging agriculture and permitting the free

Administrative measures of Sully.

exportation of corn, but he applied himself diligently to the humbler task of reforming the financial administration. In this he kept two principles steadily in view, to insist rigorously that the levy of all sums on the people should be definitely authorised by the government, and to enforce a proper system of audit of the national finances. Thus he obliged the military governors to apply to the treasury for the pay of their troops, he abolished a crowd of useless and expensive financial agents and forced them to refund their ill-gotten gains, he caused the assessment registers to be verified and corrected, and swept away at a blow a number of false claims for exemption which had been corruptly admitted. By such measures he soon succeeded in restoring order to the finances. In twelve years of rigorous and just administration he relieved the French people from paying unauthorised and illegal taxation, and this saved them more than 120 millions of francs annually, he remitted to them more than 20 millions of arrears, paid off or cancelled 330 millions of debt, provided the necessary resources for the maintenance of a large army, and an expensive court, and stored up in the cellars of the Bastille a treasure of 30 millions against unforeseen contingencies. Well may France look upon him and his master as the joint founders of her national greatness.

The restoration of order after thirty years of civil war was a task far more difficult and no less necessary than the purification of the financial system. In France the Crown had ever been the champion of order and centralisation, the nobles the representatives of disorder and local independence. In England the nobles were a class singled out from their fellow-countrymen by greater responsibilities, in France they formed a caste distinguished from the inferior people by special privileges. Their tendency therefore naturally was to magnify those privileges, and to intensify the distinctions which separated them both from the king and the Commonalty, to assert rights of their own rather than assist in vindicating the rights of others. Nothing

Relations between the Crown and the Nobles.

is more significant in the history of England than the fact that throughout the constitutional struggles of the medieval period the nobles as a whole were anxious to make common cause with the people and content to share their victory with them. Parliament, the representative of the nation in its three estates, thus became by their common action the depositary and the safeguard of the national liberty. In France on the other hand the nobles are ever found fighting for their own class interests. Fenced round by their own privileges, regardless of the common weal, they aspired to an independence which could not but be destructive of national life. The people learned to look to the Crown as their protector from the licence of the nobles, to welcome its increasing power as representing greater security of life and property. A centralised and absolute Crown might possibly be a curse in the future, a decentralised and independent nobility was beyond question a curse evident and imminent in the present. And so the States-General, the representative of France in her three estates, was permitted to sink into oblivion by a Crown which would have no rival, and a nation which preferred the maintenance of its class jealousies to that union of classes which could alone secure liberty.

Policy of Henry IV. towards the nobles.

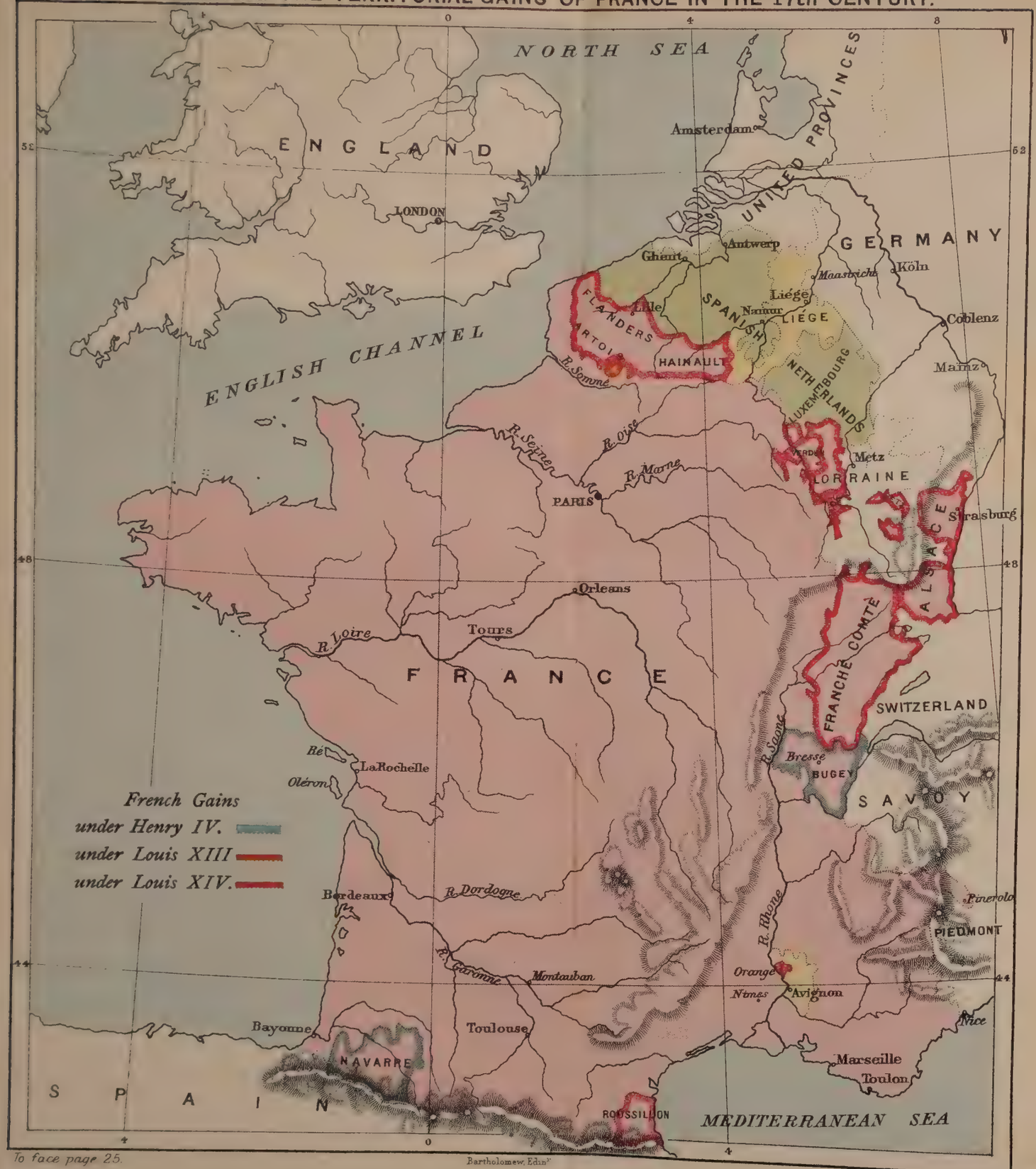
The religious wars had afforded a great opportunity to the nobles of asserting their independence. Many of them had embraced Calvinism, and so gained for their disintegrating aspirations a religious sanction and a political ideal. It is said that by the Edict of Nantes Calvinistic worship was legalised in 3500 castles. Faction is ever strong when the Crown is weak, and Henry IV. had to buy the doubtful allegiance of many of the smaller nobles by sheer bribery, before he could establish himself upon the throne. But no sooner had he made his position secure than the nobles found that they had a master. They might be courtiers but not politicians. Henry deliberately intrusted the affairs of government to men of business of inferior rank, dependent on himself, and jealous of the nobles. Rigid

inquiry was made into the privileges claimed by the nobles, and those which could not be substantiated were rescinded. The institution of the *paulette* was intended to create a noblesse of the robe as a counterpoise to the noblesse of the sword. Duelling, that much-loved privilege of a gentleman, was absolutely forbidden, and the issue of letters of pardon to those who killed their adversary in a duel stopped. The nobles, accustomed to the licence of civil war, soon grew restive under the strong hand of Henry. The maréchal de Biron, on the part of the Catholics, and the duc de Bouillon, the leader of the Huguenots, permitted themselves to enter into relations with Savoy and Spain, and to talk somewhat vaguely of a partition of France, in a way which was incompatible with loyalty to the king. When Henry struck he struck hard. The thirty-two wounds which Biron had received in the service of France failed to obtain his pardon. In 1602 he was executed, and his death gave the signal for the beginning of that war of revenge on the part of the Crown against the nobles, which was carried on with such relentless severity by Richelieu, and did not cease until the triumph of the Crown was assured under Louis XIV. The duc de Bouillon escaped to Germany, the comte d'Auvergne was imprisoned, the duc d'Epernon, frightened into submission, was pardoned. Perhaps Henry himself hardly dared to touch the former companion of Henry III., the governor of half France, and the proudest of all her proud nobility. Four years afterwards the vengeance of Henry was still awake though all the excitement and danger had long ago quieted down. In 1606 he travelled through the disaffected districts of the south and south-west accompanied by an army, destroyed several castles belonging to the nobles, and put to death, after sentences by special tribunals, those who had taken a prominent part in the late troubles.

The conspiracy of Biron, 1602.

But it was in the sphere of foreign affairs that the genius of Henry IV. fully displayed itself. For many years France had played a sorry part in European politics. If Francis I.

MAP SHOWING THE TERRITORIAL GAINS OF FRANCE IN THE 17th CENTURY.



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Bartholomew, Edin.r

had done something to preserve Europe from falling under the yoke of Charles v., men also remembered that he was the perjured of Madrid, the abettor and the ally of the Turk. Since his death France had fallen lower and lower in the scale of nations, until under the stress of the religious wars she seemed to bid fair to become another Italy, a plaything tossed to and fro among the nations of Europe. It was the stubbornness of the Dutch, and the craft of Elizabeth, not the patriotism of Frenchmen, which had saved France from the yoke of Philip II. in that terrible time. After the peace of Vervins Henry had to restore the national prestige, and regain the national influence which had died almost to nothing. The great danger to France lay from the pressure exercised upon an indefensible frontier on all sides by the Austro-Spanish power. While Spain held Roussillon, Franche-Comté, and the Netherlands, and could reckon on the vassalage of Savoy, while the passes of the Vosges were in the hands of the Empire, the Austro-Spanish House held the gates of France. France could not breathe with the hand of her enemy on her throat. But the strength of a chain is that of its weakest link, and Henry's eagle eye soon detected the weak place in the circle of iron which bound him. It lay in north Italy, the old battle-field of France and Spain. The Milanese was a rich open country, depending for its protection from attack upon its fortresses and its rivers. It was a fief of the Empire in the possession of Spain, and its communications with Spain by sea through the friendly port of Genoa were more easy than with Germany, through the tedious and often difficult mountain paths which connected the Valtelline with the Brenner pass and the valley of the Inn. It lay therefore invitingly open to attack from the mountains of Savoy on the west, and those of the Grisons on the north, and if once it fell into the hands of France, not only would the chain which bound her be broken, but a terrible counterblow would be dealt to the influence of the Austro-Spanish House in

Foreign policy of Henry IV.

The indefensible frontier of France.

Europe, for through Milan ran the road by which Spain could best open communications in safety with south Germany and Franche-Comté. If that way was blocked, the only route possible for the troops and treasure of Spain was the long sea voyage by the Bay of Biscay and the English Channel to Antwerp and the Spanish Netherlands, a route fraught with peril from the storms which rage round Cape Finisterre, and from the English and French privateers which swarmed in the narrow seas.

Importance of Savoy.

In Italy, therefore, lay the opportunity of France, and Savoy held the key of the position. The duchy of Savoy, which still extended as far as the Rhone, and disputed with the king of France for the rule over Provence and Dauphiné, had been gradually pushed by its more powerful neighbour more and more towards Italy. Its duke had quite lately established himself in his capital of Turin at the foot of the mountain, and his ambition was to become an Italian prince. But though Piedmont and not Savoy had become the centre of his power, the border land of Savoy and not the Italian land of Piedmont became necessarily the centre of his policy. Situated on the mountains between France and the Milanese, Savoy held the gates both of France and of Imperial Italy. Through her mountain passes could pour, when she gave the word, the troops of France into the fertile plains of Lombardy, or those of the Habsburgs into the valley of the Rhone. A position so decisive and so dangerous rendered a consistent policy impossible. Courted by both parties, her opportunity lay in playing off one against the other as long as possible, but her safety necessitated the choice of the stronger for her ally in the end. A misreading of the political barometer at a critical moment would mean nothing less than national extinction. From the time that the rivalry between France and the Austro-Spanish power began to develop itself in Italy, the dukes of Savoy had been compelled to follow this tortuous policy. During the Italian

expeditions of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. they were on the side of victorious France, but in the war between Francis I. and Charles V. Savoy veered to the side of the Emperor. Punished for this by the occupation of his country by French troops for twenty-five years, the duke was reinstated in his dominions at the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559), subject to the continued occupation by France of six fortresses, including Susa and Pinerolo, which commanded the gates of important passes through the Alps. In the troubles which afflicted France under the later Valois kings, Charles Emmanuel of Savoy succeeded in obtaining possession of Saluzzo; and although it was provided in the treaty of Vervins that he should restore it, the provision remained a dead letter. This gave Henry IV. the opportunity he desired of recalling Savoy to the French alliance. In 1600, after the death of Gabrielle d'Estrées, he had procured a divorce from his first wife Marguerite de Valois, and had strengthened his influence in Italy by his marriage with Marie de Médicis, the daughter of the grand-duke of Tuscany. In the same year he marched upon Savoy and quickly overran it, but in January 1601 agreed to a treaty with the young duke Charles Emmanuel, who had succeeded Emmanuel Philibert in 1580, by which Saluzzo was left in the hands of Savoy, but France obtained instead the two small duchies of Bresse and Bugey. By this treaty Savoy was brought back into alliance with France at the price of the surrender of a distant possession, which, in the hands of France, could not but be considered a standing menace and a cause of hostility by the court of Turin.

Cession of Bresse and Bugey to France.

Thus Henry IV. laid the foundations of the policy afterwards so successfully pursued in Italy by Richelieu. In fact, to both of these great statesmen the end to be attained was the same. The abasement of the Austro-Spanish House in the interests of France was the beginning and end of their foreign policy. But Henry had not the same opportunities

of putting his designs into execution which were enjoyed by his successor. It is difficult to say how far the Great Design attributed to Henry in the *Memoirs of Sully* was ever more than a dream. Statesmen have often sought relief from the *ennui* engendered by the pettiness of diplomatic routine in the delightful task of building political castles in the air, and it is likely enough that Henry, in his more imaginative moments, conceived of a Europe in which religious jars should cease and national dissensions rest, at the bidding of an arbitration court which represented a confederacy of free states, and was the mouthpiece of a law of religious toleration. It is not less likely that his shrewd genius also foresaw that in a Europe whose unity depended on political confederacy, whose peace was secured by religious toleration, there would be no room for the Holy Roman Empire or for the monarchy of Spain. The destruction of the Austro-Spanish House was a condition precedent to the success of the Great Design. If Henry ever intended seriously to try to combine those who represented the political forces of Protestantism in a confederacy against Spain and the Empire, based on a recognition of the three religions, he must have abandoned the attempt as hopeless on the death of Elizabeth in 1603.

Attack upon the Austro-Spanish House.

The Great Design.

A few years later, however, an opportunity presented itself of dealing a blow at the Austro-Spanish House in a less original but equally effective way. In 1609 John William,[1] duke of Cleves, Jülich, and Berg died without children, and the right of succession was claimed by two princes. John Sigismond, the elector of Brandenburg, whose wife was the child of the eldest daughter of William the Rich, brother and predecessor of the last duke, rested his wife's claim partly on his descent from the elder branch, and partly on a will made by William the Rich in which he gave the descendants of the elder daughter prefer-

The Cleves-Jülich question.

[1] See Appendix III.

ence over those of the younger. The count palatine of Neuburg had married a younger daughter of William the Rich, who claimed the inheritance as being the nearest of kin. The eldest sister of John William being dead, she made over her claim to her son Wolfgang William. The question was therefore mainly the old one of the eldest by descent against the nearest of kin, and was eminently one for the imperial courts to decide. But the matter was complicated by religious considerations. The three duchies lay along the course of the lower Rhine from the frontiers of the United Provinces nearly to Andernach, enclosing within their embraces a considerable part of the archbishopric of Köln. The population was Catholic but both the claimants were Lutherans, and on the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio*, laid down by the religious peace of Augsburg, if the duchies passed into Lutheran hands, there was a strong probability that they would before long not only become Lutheran themselves, but drag the vacillating archbishopric of Köln with them. The Emperor, Rudolf, in order to guard against this danger, at once claimed the right of administering the duchies until the question of the succession was settled, and sent an army to occupy Jülich. But if the Catholics could not permit the duchies to fall into Lutheran hands, still less could Protestant or French interests see unmoved the imperial armies encamped on the borders of the United Provinces, in close proximity to the frontiers of France and the Spanish Netherlands. An imperial army on the lower Rhine was a menace alike to north German Protestantism, to the hardly won Dutch independence, and to English and French jealousy.

League under Henry IV. against the Emperor, 1610.

Henry IV. seized the opportunity. He at once declared himself the protector of the rights of the elector of Brandenburg and the count of Neuburg, and put himself at the head of an alliance of the enemies of the Austro-Spanish House. England, the United Provinces, the German Protestant Union, Venice

and Savoy responded to his call. Three French armies were set on foot, one was directed to the Pyrenees, the second under Lesdiguières was to co-operate with Savoy and Venice in the conquest of the Milanese, while the third, under the command of the king himself, attacked Jülich and occupied the duchies in conjunction with the Dutch and English contingents and the German Protestants. It seemed as if the death-knell of the Austro-Spanish power had sounded. Rudolf II., ignorant of politics and half-crazed in intellect, was implicated in serious quarrels with his unwilling subjects of Bohemia and Hungary. In Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, Ferdinand, the nephew of the Emperor, was, with the help of the Jesuits, waging an ardent and determined war against the Calvinism which threatened to take a strong root even in the hereditary dominions of the Habsburgs. Wanting in money, wanting in leadership, wanting in unity, the power of Austria had no troops on which it could depend, no subjects which it could trust. Nor was Spain in much better plight. Exhausted by the ambition of Philip II., misgoverned by a weak king and an incapable minister, she had chosen this very time gratuitously to deal a serious blow to her own prosperity by expelling from her borders the Moriscoes, the most laborious and intelligent of her working population. It was clear that she could do little more to help the cause than to defend her own frontiers, and hold the Milanese against the attacks of the allies. The forces of the Catholic League, the resources of Maximilian of Bavaria, and the genius of his general Tilly, were in fact all that Catholicism and the Austro-Spanish power had to rely upon in the death duel in which she had almost by inadvertence engaged herself. Help came from a quarter the least expected. A terrible crime struck France with tragic suddenness to her knees and saved the House of Austria. As Henry IV. passed through the streets of Paris to visit his minister Sully, but two days before the date fixed for his departure for the campaign, a fanatic named Ravaillac

Assassination of Henry IV.

plunged a dagger into his heart. With Henry IV. died the combination of which he was the head and soul, and the capture of Jülich from the imperialists by Maurice of Nassau aided by a small English contingent, was the only step taken in the direction of realising the Great Design of the first of the Bourbons.

The dagger of Ravaillac not only saved the Austro-Spanish House but plunged France into fifteen years of misery and dishonour. The young king Louis XIII. was but nine years old and a regency was inevitable. The duc d'Epernon was the only man who showed the necessary energy and presence of mind to deal with the crisis which had so suddenly arisen. Surrounding the palace and the Hotel de Ville with his own troops and those of the other nobles on whom he could rely, he entered the chamber where the Parlement was assembled, and demanded that they should at once recognise the queen-mother as regent. Pointing significantly to his sword he said: 'This sword is as yet in its scabbard, but if the queen is not declared regent before this assembly separates, I foresee that it will have to be drawn. That which can be done to-day without danger cannot be done to-morrow without difficulty and bloodshed.' There were many in the Parlement who were not sorry to see that body thus suddenly raised into the unaccustomed position of the arbiter of the government of France. There were many more who found the arguments of Epernon too powerful to be resisted, and Marie was without further question recognised by a decree of the Parlement as regent of the kingdom during the minority of the king, and invested with the full powers of the crown. A Council of Regency was at once formed from among the leaders of the nobility, and thus fell in a moment the whole structure of government which Henry IV. and Sully had laboured so hard to erect. The nobles resumed their place at the head of affairs. Sully, who alone might have had influence enough to stop this disastrous counter-revolution, lost his courage, thought only of securing his own safety, and after

Marie de Medicis declared Regent.

a few ineffectual protests retired into private life. The treasure which he had so painfully amassed was squandered among the nobles to buy their adherence to the new government.

Reversal of the policy of Henry IV.

The regent, devoted in her inmost heart to Spain, and dreading the risk of foreign war, hastened to disband the larger part of the troops which Henry IV. had collected, and to set on foot secret negotiations with the court of Spain. After the capture of Jülich, on September 1st, 1610, by which all danger of Imperial aggression in the lower Rhineland was taken away, she openly announced her intention to withdraw altogether from the war, and to ally herself with Spain through the double marriage of her daughter Elizabeth to the heir to the Spanish crown, and of Anne of Austria, the eldest daughter of Philip III., to the young king of France. Six months after the murder of Henry IV. his whole policy at home and abroad had been reversed. The great combination against the House of Austria fell to pieces when France retired. The German Protestants and the Dutch made their peace with the Emperor by the truce of Willstedt, signed in October 1610. The duke of Savoy, betrayed by France, had to make his peace as best he could with Spain, and the key of Italy was once more thrown away. At home, disorder corruption and anarchy raised their heads again, and the selfish and factious nobility tore France in pieces in a struggle in which their desire for places and money was hardly disguised by a thin veneer of political ambition.

For seven years Marie held the reins of government. She was a vain, irritable, and intriguing woman with little of the talent for rule hereditary in her family, and much of the dependence upon stronger natures characteristic of her sex.

Influence of the maréchal d'Ancre.

They were years of discord and disgrace. The real rulers of France were the Italian adventurers Leonora Galigai and her husband, whom the weakness of Marie actually raised to the dignity of a marshal of France, although he had never seen a shot fired in earnest. The nobles were justly enraged at the prostitution of an

office, which they considered one of the chief prizes of their order, and bitterly jealous of the influence of a parvenu like the maréchal d'Ancre. Twice they rose in rebellion under the leadership of the worthless prince de Condé,[1] but d'Ancre and Marie knew well the sop to throw to that Cerberus. A quarter of a million of livres purchased the treaty of Ste. Menehould on May 15th, 1614, and six million that of Loudun in May 1616, and the Regent and her minister quietly pursued their policy unmoved by demands for reform which died in the presence of gold. The feeble ray of dying constitutionalism alone sheds a pale gleam of interest over the dreary years. Partly in the hopes of strengthening her own position, partly to take a cry, always dangerous, out of the mouth of Condé, Marie de Médicis consented to summon once more the States-General of France and ask their advice upon the grievances of the kingdom.

The melancholy interest which surrounds a deathbed attaches to this the last meeting of the States-General of monarchical France. The Estates assembled at Paris on the 14th of October 1614, according to their three orders. There appeared 140 representatives of the clergy, 132 of the noblesse, 192 of the Tiers Etat, but these last were not in any real sense representatives of the commonalty of France. The name of a merchant or a farmer or a small landowner does not appear among them. They were for the most part of the official and professional classes, officers of the petty districts into which France was divided, financial and municipal officers, with a sprinkling of lawyers and citizens, and they at once assumed the rôle which their composition marked out for them, and organised themselves as the official order in opposition to the other orders of the clergy and the noblesse. From the beginning the jealousy of the three orders among themselves, and the fatal determination of the Tiers Etat to defend the privileges of their own official

Meeting of the States-General, 1614.

Quarrels between the orders.

[1] See Appendix II.

class against the nobles, instead of urging the grievances of the country upon the Crown, rendered the possibility of obtaining any real check upon the Crown absolutely hopeless. The nobles not unnaturally looked with jealous eyes on the gradual formation of an hereditary privileged class of officials, by means of the purchase of offices and the right of transmission secured by the *paulette*, which could not fail to grow in a little time into a second noblesse, and they directed their efforts mainly to procuring the abolition of purchase in the civil services. The Tiers Etat on their side, numbering as they did but comparatively few of the privileged 'exempt' among their ranks, fixed their eyes on the inordinate pensions enjoyed by the great nobles, and demanded the abolition of the pension list and the reduction of the *taille*. This was to hit the nobles in their weakest place, and the contention between the two orders became so keen that the court had to interfere and bring about a reconciliation. Hardly however had the Tiers Etat finished their controversy with the nobles, than they became involved in a quarrel with the clergy. The magistracy, especially the lawyers, were strongly Gallican in their views of ecclesiastical government, that is, they maintained the right of the national authorities to govern the Church in France in all matters which were not directly spiritual in their nature, and repudiated interference from the Pope. Especially they disliked the Jesuits, and wished to avoid the recognition of the decrees of the Council of Trent, which had not as yet been formally accepted by France. The Tiers Etat accordingly drew up an article in their *cahier*, or list of grievances, which, under the form of asserting the right divine of the French kings, and denouncing the crime of regicide, impliedly denied the right of the popes to depose kings and absolve subjects from their allegiance. At once the whole question between the Gallicans and the Ultramontanes was raised, and for more than a month no other matter was discussed among the Estates. The nobles sided with the clergy, and agreed with them on twenty-four articles represent-

ing their common views, among which the recognition of the decrees of Trent and the maintenance of the authority of the Holy See assumed an equal place of importance with the union of Navarre and Béarn to France, and the abolition of the *paulette* and the purchase system. The Parlement supported the Tiers Etat, and by its interference introduced one more cause of dissension. Finally, the court had again to interfere and order the Tiers Etat to omit the objectionable article from their *cahier*. Yet in spite of these suicidal quarrels, which proved the unfitness of the States-General to undertake constitutional responsibilities, their meeting was not wholly useless. Differing on almost all other questions, the three orders were agreed upon an attack upon the financial administration. Jeannin, the finance minister, was, in spite of the efforts of the court, forced to produce accounts, which, when produced, showed clearly enough that none had been kept which were fit for production. The consent of the Crown was obtained to a considerable reduction of the pension list, the suppression of the *paulette*, and the erection of a special court to control the finances. Endowed with no legislative power, all that the Estates could do in the way of ameliorating the government was to make representations and extort promises, and this they did as effectively as circumstances permitted in the most important department of administration. If it must be allowed that they did much to destroy their own influence and render themselves ridiculous by their jealousy and quarrelsomeness, it must also be remembered that no king ever dared to summon them again until monarchy was tottering to its fall.

Reforms brought about by the States-General.

Louis was declared of age just before the meeting of the States-General in 1614, when he had reached his fourteenth year. In 1616 the hated double marriage with Spain was celebrated, and Marie's triumph was complete. It was short-lived—Louis himself shared the universal hatred felt for the maréchal

Fall of the maréchal d'Ancre. Ministry of Luynes, 1617.

d'Ancre. Urged on by his friend and fellow-sportsman the count de Luynes, he determined to take the government into his own hands. A third rising of the nobles at the beginning of 1617 professed as its object the saving of the king from the hands of a foreigner. Only the queen-mother supported her favourite, but she was powerless against her son. As the maréchal entered the Louvre on the 25th of April 1617, he was ordered in the king's name to surrender his sword. On his refusal the guard fired and he fell dead. His wife was not long in following him. Condemned on an absurd charge of sorcery, she was executed shortly after. The queen-mother was obliged to retire to Blois, and Louis, seeing his oppressors so successfully disposed of, felt that at last he was king. He was mistaken. He had only exchanged one master for another. Luynes, who succeeded to the power formerly exercised by the maréchal d'Ancre, soon proved neither more capable or honest in administration, nor more agreeable to the nobles. The queen-mother never ceased her intrigues to regain her power, intrigues which became daily more dangerous as they were directed by the unseen hand of Richelieu. In 1619 the old duke of Epernon, in 1620 the dukes of Mayenne and Vendôme, in alliance with the Huguenots under Rohan and La Tremouille, rose in her favour, and Louis and his favourite found themselves obliged to come to an arrangement with her.

But no sooner had the treaty of Angoulême, made in February 1619, and confirmed in 1620, restored harmony between Louis and his mother and the nobles, than the Huguenots, who wished to take advantage of the troubles of the court in order to increase their political independence, threw all the south of France into a blaze. Frightened by the forced restoration of Catholicism in Béarn in 1620, they struck boldly for independence, dreamed of a Huguenot republic in the south of France, and were content to see the dismemberment of the nation, if by it they could satisfy their personal ambition.

Rising of the Huguenots, 1620.

Wherever the eye turned among the various interests of which France was composed, whether upon Luynes and the courtiers, upon the queen-mother and her rival court, upon Condé and the nobles, upon Rohan and the Huguenots, the same picture of self-seeking ambition and personal aims was everywhere presented. Each one for himself and no one for the country was the motto of all among the leaders of France with two exceptions. The king himself and Richelieu the young bishop of Luçon, at that time in disgrace with his patroness Marie de Médicis, were the only ones in whose breasts the love of France burned with a pure and unsullied flame, and the hour had not yet struck which was to bind them together in a common work for the common weal. Meanwhile the crisis was a serious one, and Louis set himself manfully to meet it. The clash of arms, and the threat of danger, always brought out the stronger parts of his nature. He confirmed the Edict of Nantes, then at the head of a large army, after quieting the north, he marched towards the great Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle and captured S. Jean d'Angely in spite of the efforts of Soubise. Leaving the duc d'Epernon to form the siege of La Rochelle, he directed all his energies to the capture of Montauban, the great Huguenot stronghold of the south, while Montmorency subdued the Cevennes. For three months the stout city resisted all the ill-directed efforts of the royal army, and in November 1621 the king sullenly withdrew the remnants of his perishing troops. The death of Luynes from a fever caught in camp did much to make peace possible, and the victory of Louis and Condé over Soubise in the marches of Rie in April 1622 brought it near. The Huguenots had come to see that without foreign assistance their cause was hopeless. The duc de Bouillon remained immovable in the north. Lesdiguières, the old Huguenot leader, became a Catholic and received the bâton of Constable. La Force, the heroic defender of Montauban, accepted the rank of marshal of France and a gift of 200,000 crowns. Rohan alone remained steadfast, but he too

was forced to accept the inevitable, when it became clear that Montpellier, the last Huguenot fortress of the south, must surrender. The peace of Montpellier, signed on the 19th October 1622, marks the first great step taken by the Crown towards the destruction of the Huguenots as a political organisation. By it religious toleration was secured to them, but they were forbidden to hold political assemblies of any kind whatever. All fortifications recently raised by them were to be demolished, and La Rochelle and Montauban were to be for the future the only guaranteed towns. The victory of France over the Huguenots had results far more extended than appeared upon the surface. The restoration of civil order in the country naturally led to an attempt to restore personal harmony at court, and under the auspices of La Vieuville, who now exercised the chief influence in the ministry, a settlement of the questions still at issue between the king and his mother was effected. One of the conditions of this settlement was the entry of Richelieu into the royal council. From that day a new era dawned for France.

The peace of Montpellier, 1622. Entry of Richelieu into the Ministry.

CHAPTER III

THE COUNTER-REFORMATION AND RELIGIOUS TROUBLES IN GERMANY

Causes of the Counter-Reformation—The weakness of Protestantism—The revival in the Church—The influence of the Jesuits—Beginning of the Counter-Reformation in Poland, in Germany, in the Austrian dominions—Questions still unsettled in Germany, the position of the Calvinists, the secularised lands, the ecclesiastical reservation—Dangerous position of the Calvinists of the Rhineland—The troubles of Donauwörth—Formation of the Calvinist Union and the Catholic League—Constitutional difficulties between the Emperor and the Bohemians—Revolt of the Bohemian Protestants—The throwing from the windows.

THE reaction against Protestantism in Europe began to make itself felt in the concluding years of the sixteenth century. Like all great movements in the religious, as in the political, sphere, it owed its existence to many complex causes. To some extent racial distinctions asserted themselves. The Romance-speaking nations and the Sclavonic peoples, roughly speaking, after a moment of hesitation declared plainly against Protestantism. To a larger extent political reasons dictated the attitude of governments, and governments were able to do much towards defining the religion of their subjects. The determined stand made by Spain in defence of Catholicism was greatly affected by the ambition of Philip II. to make himself master of Europe. The effective opposition to the domination of Spain offered by Elizabeth was far more due to zeal for the independence and commercial prosperity of England than to differences of faith. The final resolve of France to remain distinctly Catholic was, as we have seen, due to the fact that

Causes of the Counter-Reformation.

she prized her unity before everything, and the Huguenots were the party of disruption.

Inherent weakness of Protestantism.

But after making all allowance for the influence of other considerations, the reasons which determined the course of events remained always religious. Protestantism was at the first the expression of a great moral revolution. The religious and moral nature of man rose in rebellion against a distorted faith, and an immoral system which seemed incapable of reform. Based mainly on a negative theology, it was at its strongest as long as its work was almost wholly destructive. The overthrow of moral abuse, the attack on wrongly defined faith was easy to men inspired with the zeal of a crusade on behalf of truth. But when it, in its turn, was called upon by the necessities of controversy to attempt to construct a system of its own, to lay down principles, to explain truth, its weakness became evident. Quickly divided into the two great schools named after Luther and Calvin, in hopeless and virulent antagonism, it was soon seen that in each division the tendency was still further to define and still further to divide. Confession followed confession in the hopeless attempt to arrive at unity through the expression of self-evident, perfect, truth in human language. The only result was greater division. Lutheranism, to avoid the danger of disruption, took refuge under the wing of the State, and as it became more and more merely the moral department of governments, it lost more and more its powers over mankind. From the middle of the sixteenth century its progress began to cease, and when progress stops in a religious movement, reaction begins. Calvinism showed more vitality. It was more aggressive and lent itself as readily to the aid of those opposed to governmental centralisation, as Lutheranism did to the assistance of the governments themselves. Its stern creed, with its strong tendency to fanaticism and bigotry, produced a type of character always concentrated and effective, and often lofty and severe. It was seen at its best when combined with the

spirit of patriotism and liberty in the Dutch and the Swiss, at its worst when degraded into a pretext for selfishness and faction in France and in Germany. At one time it looked as if it was going to carry everything before it. Firmly rooted in Scotland, Switzerland, the upper Rhine-land, and among the Dutch, it was rapidly winning over to its flag England, France, and Hungary, was making rapid strides in the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria, and had even made good its footing in north Italy and Spain. But like Lutheranism it was more fitted to attack than to defend, to win than to consolidate, and gradually the tide began to ebb. The long and bitter struggle in the Netherlands ended in a division of territory. The seven northern provinces became independent and remained Calvinist, in spite of the utmost efforts of Philip II., but south and west of the Scheldt the country adhered to Spain and Catholicism. England in her national expression of religion, under the guidance of Elizabeth, definitely refused to become Calvinistic, though many Englishmen became Calvinists. France, as we have seen, having to choose between Calvinism and unity, not only chose to remain Catholic and united, but set herself deliberately to root out the political influence of the Huguenot organisation.

But after all, it was not the inherent weakness of Protestantism, either in its philosophical, religious, or political aspects, which finally put an end to its progress, and turned back the tide. It was the greatly increased strength of Catholicism. The power of Protestantism lay, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, in its protest against wicked lives and a degraded system. By the end of the century that protest was no longer needed, and no longer effective. The Church, which had refused to reform itself after the horrors of the great schism under the pressure of the councils of Constance and Basel, and had answered the trumpet call of Savonarola with an excommunication at the hands of Alexander VI., had at length been

Religious revival in the Church.

forced into reform by the success of Protestantism. The Council of Trent left its mark upon the Roman Church in two special ways. By the establishment of the seminaries, and the enforcement of residence, it reformed the clergy and taught them to be the teachers of the people. By the acknowledgment of Papal supremacy it centralised the organisation of the Roman Church, as an army is centralised under the absolute command of its leader, to whom unquestioning obedience is due. From that time the Pope has exercised influence over a smaller area of Europe than before the Reformation, but with far greater power of compelling obedience among his own adherents. The institution of new religious orders, and the remarkable revival of the religious life in the Roman Church in the century following the Reformation, is perhaps the proof rather than the cause of the renewal of personal piety and the spirit of self-sacrifice, but the foundation of the Society of Jesus marks a turning-point in the religious history of the world. Ignatius Loyola was a soldier before he was a priest, and his Society was a military organisation for religious purposes. The conquest of heresy and infidelity was its object, obedience and renunciation of personality were to it the first of virtues. A Jesuit, who was thoroughly imbued with the principles of his order, lost his individuality and became but a part of a great machine. He lived, moved, felt, thought, but in his Society and for it alone. Trained on one system, directed by the will of one man, bound by its constitution to implicit obedience to the Pope, the Society of Jesus, as it spread over the whole world in the ardour and pure enthusiasm of its earlier years, formed a power in the hands of the Papacy, which, from the intense concentration of its government, and the immense diffusion of its activity, has never been equalled in the world's history. In Europe, where Protestantism was the great enemy to be overthrown, it seized with characteristic dexterity upon education as its chief work.

Influence of the Jesuits.

Protestantism, though born of the Renaissance, had done little to satisfy the demands for increased knowledge which the growing spirit of free inquiry was making so loudly. It had trained some scholars, it had done little for general education. The Jesuits seized the opportunity. They offered to the world the best education attainable free of cost, and before long they had far distanced all competitors. The value of this to the Church in countries where Protestantism was powerful but not dominant can hardly be exaggerated. It was a guarantee that the rising intelligence of the country should be trained in the most uncompromising school of churchmanship. No Catholic power found itself able to dispense with their support. Even in France where Calvinism was strong, under a king whose religion was always tempered by policy, the Jesuits managed to make good their footing in spite of the most virulent and active opposition of the Sorbonne. To the rulers of Bavaria and Austria, who were sincerely anxious for the rooting out of Protestantism, they were simply invaluable. Thus by the end of the century the tables had become completely turned. Zeal, devotion, learning, self-sacrifice, religious enthusiasm, were now on the side of the Church. Superior in organisation, superior in religious effort, superior in concentration, the Church presented a united and effective front to her enemies, and was prepared, when the opportunity should come, to initiate a crusade by the help of the Jesuits against Protestantism in Europe, while a new world was being won for her across the ocean by their missionary efforts.

Their educational work.

The opportunity was not long in coming. In the concluding years of the sixteenth century men attained to power in central Europe, whose youth had been trained under the influences of the Catholic revival. Already by the efforts of Philip II. and S. Carlo Borromeo, with the assistance of the Inquisition, the movement in favour of Protestantism in Spain and Italy had been crushed, and heresy driven back behind the Alps and the Pyrenees. In 1587 Sigismund,

the son of John of Sweden and Catherine Jagellon, was elected to the throne of Poland. Sigismund was a staunch Catholic, and owed his election to the efforts of the Catholics. He at once set himself to restore Poland to Catholicism. He used the royal patronage, which was extremely extensive in Poland, in favour of Catholics only. He called the Jesuits to his assistance, supported them with money, and encouraged the sons of the nobility to attend their schools. In disputed questions as to the right to the ecclesiastical buildings he used the influence of the crown in favour of the Catholics, and was so successful in this, that it is said that Dantzig was the only town of importance in Poland where the Protestants retained the use of the parish church. Thus in a few years the whole of the official classes became Catholic; while large country districts, especially in Livonia and Lithuania, were won back to the old faith by the efforts of the Jesuit missionaries. In Germany recourse was had to still stronger measures, for in virtue of the principle of the religious peace of Augsburg of 1555 it was held that every ruler had the right of dictating the religion of his subjects. Accordingly at Christmas 1595, the bishop of Bamberg issued an edict banishing from the diocese all who refused to receive the Eucharist according to the Catholic rite. Emboldened by his success, the bishop of Paderborn followed his example a few years afterwards, and established and endowed a Jesuit college in his cathedral city. In the first years of the new century the electors von Bicken and Schweikard of Mainz, Ernest and Ferdinand of Köln and Lothaire of Trier, partly by governmental pressure, partly by personal influence, restored Catholicism permanently in the three archbishoprics of the Rhine. But it was in south Germany that the greatest results were obtained. In 1596 Ferdinand, the cousin of the emperor Rudolf II., came of age, and succeeded to the duchies of Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, formerly held by his father the archduke Charles. Ferdinand was a

The Counter-Reformation in Poland.

In Germany.

In Styria.

man of resolute will and deep religious convictions, which had been developed by his Jesuit teachers into something little short of fanaticism. He looked upon the restoration of Catholicism as the special work of his life, and kneeling before the shrine of Loretto the year after his accession, he solemnly swore to eradicate Protestantism from his hereditary dominions. He did not sleep upon his promise. In 1598 edicts were issued ordering all Protestant ministers to leave the country within fourteen days. In the following year commissions were sent through the country to enforce the edicts. The Protestant churches were thrown down, the pastors ejected, and the inhabitants compelled to conform to Catholicism. The Emperor, seeing his cousin's success, followed in his footsteps, and from 1599 to 1603 similar commissions were issued for Upper and Lower Austria, and the Protestant ministers were driven out. Not content with this, Rudolf proceeded to follow a similar policy in his other dominions. In 1602 he suppressed the meetings of the Moravian brethren in Bohemia and Moravia, and gave armed assistance to the efforts of the Hungarian bishops to convert their Protestant flocks. Meanwhile by the exertions of William, duke of Bavaria, and his son Maximilian, who came to the throne on the abdication of his father in 1696, powerfully assisted by the great Jesuit college at Ingolstadt, Catholicism had completely won the upper hand in Bavaria.

In Austria and Moravia.

In Bavaria.

The beginning of the seventeenth century therefore saw the reaction in favour of the Church in full flood tide of prosperity. At its head stood a pope, Paul v. (Borghese), who, if somewhat deficient in the grandeur of mind of Sixtus v., and the fervour of piety which distinguished Pius v., yielded to none of his predecessors, not even to Hildebrand himself, in the lofty conception he had formed of the nature and prerogatives of his office, and in the determination to make them respected. In Philip III. of Spain, Maximilian of Bavaria, Ferdinand of Styria, and Sigismund of Poland, he had lieutenants who

had made the restoration and increase of Catholicism the first object of their policy. Already their efforts had been crowned with success in Poland and in south Germany, and the influence of the movement had made itself felt all over the debatable land subject to the Empire, which was not as yet definitely attached to one side or the other. Even the imperial institutions themselves were affected by its progress, and men noticed that the decisions of the imperial courts of appeal were biassed by the religious opinions of the judges and of the Emperor. This was all the more important as it happened that these particular courts were at that time being called upon to decide a most interesting political question. The peace of Augsburg, concluded in 1555, which attempted to establish peace between the Church and the Lutherans in Germany, had left three problems unsolved, which were certain sooner or later to be decided by the sword, if no peaceful compromise could be arrived at in the meantime. In the first place it only applied to the Lutherans, for at the time of its conclusion the Protestant princes of the Empire were all Lutherans, and they merely thought of securing their own interests. Calvinism therefore had no rights whatever in the Empire, and had still to win its recognition from the law. Secondly, it had been laid down by the peace that the Church should no longer have any rights over Church property lying within the territories of Lutheran princes, which had been secularised by them or applied by them to Lutheran purposes, before 1552; but differences had since arisen between the two parties as to the bearing of this provision upon lands secularised subsequently to 1552. It was argued by the Catholics, that the very fact that lands secularised before 1552 were expressly exempted from all the claims of the Church, clearly implied that lands secularised after 1552 were not subject to that exemption, and had therefore been taken from the Church illegally and ought to be at once restored. The Lutherans, on the other hand,

Questions regarding the peace of Augsburg.

1. Position of the Calvinists.

2. The secularised lands.

maintained that the treaty intended to lay down a general rule, which was to apply to all lands secularised under similar circumstances, and the date only referred to the convention of Passau, which led to the religious peace, and was not meant to create two different classes of secularised lands. Following out this somewhat broad construction of the peace, large quantities of Church land had been secularised since 1552 by Lutheran and even by Calvinist princes, and used by them as a very convenient endowment for younger sons and other relations. A further difficulty arose with regard to what was called the Ecclesiastical Reservation. It frequently happened, during the earlier years of the Reformation, that a bishop or abbot, who was a territorial prince in right of his bishopric or abbacy,—of which there were a great number in Germany—became a Lutheran. In order to preserve the rights of the Church in such a case, it was provided by the peace of Augsburg, that a bishop or abbot who became a Lutheran should at once vacate his dignity. But the Protestants maintained that this Ecclesiastical Reservation, as it was called, was only intended to apply to cases where a bishop or abbot, who had been elected by a Catholic Chapter as a Catholic, became a Protestant, and did not affect those cases where a Chapter which had itself become Protestant elected a Protestant to be their bishop or abbot. In virtue of this contention, eight of the great bishoprics of north Germany and many abbacies throughout the country became practically secularised. The Protestant bishop or abbot made no pretence to ecclesiastical position or functions. He was merely a territorial prince who enjoyed the title of bishop, or sometimes administrator, instead of that of duke or landgrave, but his right to his title and his lands had never been admitted by the imperial courts or the Diet.

3. The Ecclesiastical Reservation.

As long as the tide was flowing in the direction of Protestantism the Protestant view of these matters naturally prevailed, as being that of the stronger party, and the

Catholics had to content themselves with protests. But with the advent of the Counter-Reformation things became very different. The division in the Protestant party was so envenomed, that no Lutheran would stir a finger to claim the privileges of the religious peace for Calvinists. The Catholics had now powerful friends to back them in demanding back the secularised lands. It was almost certain if the question could be brought before the imperial courts that the decision would be in their favour. The Calvinists of the upper Rhineland therefore found themselves in a dangerous position. Situated between the Spanish power on the one side and Bavaria on the other, without a shadow of legal claim to the protection of the religious peace of Augsburg, without the chance of deriving any assistance from the Lutheran princes of the north, they were in danger of being the next victims of the Emperor and Maximilian, just flushed with their triumph over heresy at home. A little incident showed how real the danger was. In 1607, at Donauwörth, a free city on the Danube, in which the Protestants were in a large majority, a Catholic procession was insulted and a religious quarrel excited. The matter was at once brought to the notice of the Imperial (Aulic) Council, a body entirely composed of nominees of the Emperor. The ban of the Empire was pronounced against Donauwörth, and Maximilian of Bavaria appointed to carry it out. He at once occupied the town with his troops, but not content with establishing order and taking security for the payment of his army, he proceeded to eject the Protestants from the churches and restore the Catholic worship, on the plea that the establishment of Protestantism there had been illegal, and was not protected by the peace of Augsburg. The immediate result of this action on the part of Maximilian, which was looked upon by the Protestants as a distinct and indefensible act of aggression, was to bring about the organisation of the two parties in two rival camps. Christian of Anhalt, one of those sanguine

Danger of the Rhineland Calvinists.

The troubles of Donauwörth, 1607.

and turbulent spirits, whose advent to the leadership of affairs is a sure presage of war and dissension, seized the opportunity to bind together the Protestant states of the Rhineland in 1608 into a Union for self-defence, which, when once formed, he hoped to be able to lead to the attack against the House of Austria. In the next year the Union was joined by the important free cities of Strasburg, Nuremberg, and Ulm. The Elector Palatine was acknowledged as its head, and Christian of Anhalt and the Margrave of Baden-Durlach appointed its generals, and German Calvinism thus stood ready to defend its interests to the death against the encroachments of the Counter-Reformation. Nor were the Catholics far behind in their preparations for war. In 1609 the Catholic League was formed among the Catholic bishops of south Germany, under the leadership of Maximilian of Bavaria, to defend Catholic interests. The Pope gave it his approval and Spain promised assistance. With the long head of Maximilian to direct its policy, with his long purse to provide the sinews of war, with his trained army under Tilly to fight its battles, and with Spain and the Pope to fall back upon, the Catholic League bid fair to distance its rival in the game for leadership in South Germany, which was being played.

Formation of the Calvinist Union, 1608.

Formation of the Catholic League, 1609.

But just at this moment occurred two events which rapidly swung the balance to the opposite side. The disputed succession to Cleves and Jülich—followed as it was by the intervention of the Emperor and the occupation of Jülich on his behalf, while the elector of Brandenburg and the count palatine of Neuburg made themselves joint masters of Cleves—brought about, as we have seen, a most formidable combination of Protestant powers under the leadership of France, to overthrow the House of Austria and put a stop to the progress of Catholicism in Germany. At the very moment when he was thus threatened by foreign attack, the unfortunate Rudolf found himself at the

Weakness of the Emperor.

mercy of his own revolted subjects. Already in 1606 his brother Matthias had taken advantage of the unpopularity caused by the forcible restoration of Catholicism in Austria and Hungary, especially among the nobility, to put himself at the head of a combination of the estates of those countries, in order to win for himself the sovereignty over them at the price of granting religious toleration. The revolt was completely successful. In 1608 Rudolf made over to his brother the government of Austria and Hungary, and Matthias, in his turn, appointed a Protestant to be palatine in Hungary, and guaranteed the free exercise of their religion, public and private, to all his subjects. The Emperor was thus left with Bohemia and Moravia alone faithful to him, but the Bohemians were no less quick than the Austrians had been to see the profit that might be made out of the weakness of their king. In 1609 the Bohemian estates extorted from him the Royal Charter (*Majestätsbrief*) as the price of their loyalty, by which freedom of conscience was secured to all who belonged to certain specified creeds, and freedom of worship granted on all Crown lands; but on private estates, and in towns, the consent of the landowner and the town authorities was made necessary to the erection of any church or the establishment of any religious worship. An arrangement so one-sided as this, by which the king was obliged to grant freedom of worship, while his subjects were not, was thoroughly unpractical. Difficulties at once broke out about its interpretation, which ended in 1611 in the deposition of Rudolf, and the recognition of Matthias as king of Bohemia. In 1612 Rudolf died and Matthias was elected emperor. The change was in favour of peace. The death of Henry IV. in 1610, and the consequent withdrawal of France and England from the combination against the House of Austria, made the Union less ready to follow the fiery counsels of Christian of Anhalt. The Cleves-Jülich question remained in abeyance after the imperial troops had been

Religious toleration in Austria and Bohemia, 1608-1609.

Death of Rudolf. Accession of Matthias, 1612.

expelled from Jülich, but was somewhat further complicated by the conversion of the count palatine of Neuburg to Catholicism, and of the elector of Brandenburg to Calvinism. Eventually by the treaty of Xanten in 1614, subsequently modified in 1630, a division of the duchies between the two claimants was agreed upon, by which the elector of Brandenburg acquired Cleves, the Mark and Ravensberg, while Jülich, Berg, and Ravenstein fell to the house of Neuburg. For eight years Germany, freed from the impending horror of a desolating war, enjoyed a truce; but still in Bohemia were to be heard murmurs that the Royal Charter was not observed by Matthias, still flowed steadily and surely the stream of the Counter-Reformation, and Maximilian of Bavaria reinforced his army and amassed treasure, awaiting the day when the sword, and the sword alone, should decide the religious question in Germany.

Settlement of the Cleves-Jülich question, 1614.

The truce was broken by the Emperor himself. Matthias was an old man without children. His brothers, who were but little younger than himself, were like him childless, and all the hopes of the Austrian House were centred upon Ferdinand of Styria as the only Habsburg who had an heir to succeed him. It became therefore the cardinal point of the policy of the Emperor, during his later years, to secure the succession of Ferdinand to the various dominions of the Austrian House in Germany, and, if possible, his eventual election to the Empire. The succession to the hereditary dominions of the Habsburgs only required the consent of the senior members of the family and the approval of Spain, and presented but little difficulty; but that to the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia was a different matter altogether, as the crown in both kingdoms was elective. By mingled address and assurance the policy of Matthias triumphed for the time. The estates of Hungary duly elected Ferdinand to be the successor of Matthias, and he was crowned at Pressburg without a murmur of opposition being heard. In

The succession of Ferdinand to Austria, Hungary and Bohemia recognised.

Bohemia courage won the day. The estates were suddenly called together in 1617, and required to acknowledge Ferdinand as the lawful successor to Matthias by hereditary right, and evidence was brought to show that they had in former times acknowledged that the crown of Bohemia was rightfully hereditary. Taken by surprise and subjected to pressure from the court the estates acquiesced in this new assumption. No leader appeared to question or refute the imperial case. Ferdinand was recognised and crowned as hereditary king of Bohemia, and at his coronation swore to observe the Royal Charter. But no sooner was Ferdinand seated on the throne than the Bohemian Protestant nobility began to realise what had been done. They had not only assisted in placing the most determined enemy of their religion over them, but, by setting aside the elective character of their monarchy, they had dealt the greatest possible blow to their own importance. The discontent found an able leader in count Henry of Thurn, who, like another Christian of Anhalt, was not a man to let scruples stand in the way of his determination to effect the dethronement of Ferdinand, and the overthrow of the House of Austria. A meeting of the Protestant members of the estates was summoned, and a petition to the Emperor agreed upon. On the reply proving unfavourable, Thurn, at the head of a body of nobles, forced his way into the palace at Prague on May 23d, 1618, and seizing the two regents of the kingdom, Martinitz and Slavata, who were accused of being the real authors of the obnoxious reply, threw them with their secretary Fabricius out of the window in old Bohemian fashion. They fell sheer seventy feet into the ditch below, but strange to say not one of them lost his life. Thurn hoped by this deed of violence to render peace between Austria and Bohemia impossible. He little thought that he had given the signal for a war which was to desolate his country and all Germany for thirty years, and throw them back in the race of civilisation for a century.

Revolt of the Protestants in Bohemia. The 'throwing from the window,' 1618.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

Character of the Bohemian Revolution—Help sent by Savoy and the Silesians—Accession of Ferdinand of Styria—Revolt in Austria—Ferdinand elected Emperor, deposed as King of Bohemia—Acceptance by Frederick, Elector Palatine, of the Crown of Bohemia—Alienation of England and the Lutheran Princes from Frederick—Bavaria, Spain, and Saxony support Ferdinand—Battle of the White Mountain—Settlement of Bohemia and Silesia—Conquest of the Palatinate—The Electorate transferred to Bavaria—The war spreads to the north—Interference of England and Denmark—Wallenstein raises an army for the Emperor—His character and views—Campaigns of 1626-1627—Defeat of Denmark—Peace of Lübeck—Edict of Restitution—New questions raised by the success of Wallenstein and the issue of the Edict.

Character of the Bohemian Revolution.

It is probable that when count Thurn and his companions threw the regents out of the window at Prague, they only intended to snap the cord which bound Bohemia and the House of Austria together, and pictured to themselves as the result of their rash act an independent Protestant Bohemia, ruled by themselves and their brother nobles under the nominal sovereignty of a puppet king of their own choosing. At first it seemed as if they were right. Germany was inclined to let king and rebellious subjects fight out the battle by themselves. John George of Saxony and Maximilian of Bavaria refused to interfere. Spain promised aid but did not send it. Matthias and Ferdinand had but fourteen thousand men under Bucquoi, a Spanish general who had served with distinction in the Netherlands, upon whom to rely. Behind that army lay an empty treasury and a discontented people. If the Bohemian revolution had

had in it anything of the spirit of calm and disinterested patriotism, capable of making all sacrifices, and determined to face all consequences, which was characteristic of the Swiss and the Dutch revolutions, the knell of the House of Austria must have sounded. But it was not so. The unconquerable spirit was with Ferdinand. A mean desire to make other people bear the burdens, while they enjoyed the fruits, of successful rebellion marked the conduct of the Bohemian leaders. A body of directors, thirty in number, was formed under the guidance of Ruppa, the ablest and most honourable of the insurgents. A diet was held to carry on the affairs of the country while Thurn took command of the army. Orders were given to raise troops, but the question at once arose who was to pay for them? The first suggestion was that the towns should have that honour, but the towns not unnaturally refused the heroic rôle of self-sacrifice so thoughtfully proposed to them by the nobles. Fresh taxes were then voted, but no one even attempted to raise them. On the news of the advance of Bucquoi towards Budweis, a Catholic town which still remained true to the Emperor, a panic seized the directors and the diet. A general levy of the male population was ordered, the raising of the taxes already voted was proposed, but rather than face so disagreeable a question the members of the diet slunk quietly home. It was like schoolboys playing at rebellion. Some of the levies made their appearance in the camp of Thurn, but there were no arms to put into their hands, no officers to train them, no money to pay them. It is not thus that successful revolutions are made. The Bohemian nobles were but a faction, fighting for licence and for power under the sacred names of liberty, of patriotism, and of religion. They must have met the fitting reward of their selfishness and their arrogance at the hands of Bucquoi and his fourteen thousand half-starved and badly paid troops, had it not been for the timely interference of other powers.

Charles Emmanuel of Savoy had not abandoned his enmity to the Austro-Spanish House because he had been obliged

to make his peace with Spain after the death of Henry IV. Of a restless and ambitious nature, but by no means devoid of natural prudence, no sooner did he hear of the revolution in Bohemia than he determined to do all in his power to assist it, provided he could do so secretly. With this object he opened negotiations with Frederick V., Elector Palatine. Frederick had succeeded to the electorate on the death of his father in 1610. Young, handsome, enthusiastic, he was readily attracted by the difficulties of an undertaking, without having sufficient mental power to surmount them. In politics he was a pupil of Christian of Anhalt, in religion a zealous Calvinist, and he looked upon himself, and was looked upon by others, as the natural leader of the German Calvinists, and the determined foe of the House of Austria and the Counter-Reformation. His political opinions had lately become of more importance to the world, through his marriage with the beautiful Elizabeth, the daughter of James I. of England. It was known that James was bent upon an alliance with Spain, and desired nothing less than to be mixed up in an European war. Still it was equally certain that he had by no means resigned the position of ally and defender of Protestantism, which he had inherited from his predecessor; and that there was a large and influential party in England, who looked upon the marriage with the Elector as a guarantee of a more decided Protestant policy.

Interference of Charles Emmanuel of Savoy.

Frederick had been the first German prince to congratulate the Bohemians on their rebellion, and offer them assistance. In July 1618 he sent a confidential agent to Prague to report upon the state of affairs, and to assure the directors of the support of the Protestant Union, should Spain or Bavaria send help to the Emperor. It was at this juncture that Charles Emmanuel appeared upon the scene, and offered through the Elector Palatine to send Mansfeld with two thousand men at once to the assistance of the Bohemians, if it could be made to appear that the troops were sent by the Elector himself.

Frederick at once agreed. The real truth was known only to the Elector Palatine, Christian of Anhalt, and the margrave of Anspach, and when Mansfeld arrived at the scene of war in September 1618, and formed the siege of Pilsen, all the world believed that he was acting on behalf of Frederick, and many concluded that the Elector would not have dared to take so serious a step, unless he had reason to reckon on the support of England. The relief was well-timed, but the arrangement was not very creditable to any of the parties concerned, for Mansfeld, though an able soldier, was one of that class of military adventurers ever bred in times of war to be the bane and scourge of the helpless and inoffensive people. To put such a man in command, at the beginning of a national struggle, was to stamp it at once as a war of brutality and plunder. His arrival, however, at Pilsen changed the face of affairs.

Mansfeld sent to assist the Bohemians.

The Silesians hearing the action, as they thought, of the Elector Palatine resolved to interfere, and sent three thousand men to the assistance of the Bohemians. Bucquoi in the face of these reinforcements, not only checked his advance on Prague, but was soon obliged to fall back to Budweis, where he was besieged by Thurn. On the 21st of November Pilsen surrendered to Mansfeld, and by the end of the year Budweis with its beleaguered garrison was all that was left to the Emperor of his Bohemian kingdom and army.

Further assistance sent from Silesia.

The year 1619 opened still more darkly for the House of Austria. The worn-out Emperor sank at last into his grave on the 20th of March, and men felt that with the accession of Ferdinand the time for compromise had passed. If they wanted to win the day, they must strike quickly before he could rally to his aid the unwieldy forces of the Empire and of Spain. Negotiations which had been begun at Eger were at once stopped. The diets of Silesia Moravia and Lusatia openly joined the Bohemian cause, and arranged with Bohemia the contingent

Death of Matthias. Accession of Ferdinand, 1619.

which they should each provide for the common army, and the proportion of votes which they were to have in the election of a new Bohemian king. The estates of Upper and Lower Austria, who were mainly Protestant, adopted the cause of the Bohemians as their own, voted men for the war, seized and administered the archducal estates, and summoned Thurn and the Bohemian army to their aid. Nothing loth Thurn, leaving Hohenlohe to watch Bucquoi, swooped down upon Vienna hoping to end the war and secure the success of the revolution by a brilliant *coup de main*. On June 2d, Ferdinand, defenceless, harassed, hopeless, had consented to give audience to a deputation of the estates, who were to urge upon him, as the only chance of deliverance, the recognition of the Bohemian revolution, and the establishment in Austria of a separately organised Protestant government. None knew better than Ferdinand himself that if he refused those terms the gates of Vienna would be opened to Thurn and his army. That very night might find him a prisoner in the hands of his greatest foe. Yet at this crisis of his life, and of the fate of Europe, he never faltered. 'If it be God's will,' he said, 'let me perish in the struggle.' He was ready to perish, not an inch would he yield. The deputation became excited. They pressed round him clamorously. Eagerly they urged, imperiously they demanded the acceptance of their terms. One deputy had actually, it is said, his hand upon the archduke's person, when suddenly there rang through the hall a trumpet blast, and the streets were alive with the confused noise which heralds the arrival of soldiers. It was a regiment of loyal cavalry, the vanguard of reinforcements ordered up from the country by Ferdinand.

Revolt in Austria.

The crisis was over. The deputation dispersed abashed and afraid for their own safety. The very next day Thurn arrived before the gates of the city, and found them shut, and the walls manned. He had not resources for a siege, and retired back again across the frontier as quick as he

had come. He was only just in time, Bucquoi had at last received reinforcements from the Spanish Netherlands, and leaving part of his army to watch Hohenlohe at Budweis suddenly fell upon Mansfeld, who was marching to join Hohenlohe at Zablat, and completely destroyed his army. The siege of Budweis was at once raised, and Bucquoi advanced into south Bohemia driving Hohenlohe before him, until he was suddenly recalled to defend Pressburg and Vienna from the advance of Bethlen Gabor, Prince of Transylvania, who had just declared for the Bohemians. Among those who distinguished themselves at the battle of Zablat was a Bohemian noble, who commanded one of the Walloon regiments of cavalry, count Albert von Waldstein.

Hardly had Ferdinand escaped from the attack of his enemies at Vienna, than he had to betake himself to Frankfort to support his interests at the approaching imperial election. At first sight there seemed little doubt of his success, as he was certain of the three ecclesiastical votes, which, with his own vote as king of Bohemia, would give him the majority. But the elector of Saxony took a formal objection to the exercise by Ferdinand of the Bohemian vote, until the settlement of the Bohemian question had made it clear that the Crown was rightfully his, and all felt that it would not be safe to proceed to an election until so formidable a legal point had been decided. The way therefore was still open to the Calvinist representatives, the Elector Palatine and the margrave of Brandenburg, by clever management to avoid the election of Ferdinand, if they could not actually secure that of their own nominee. If they had at once supported with their whole strength the policy of John George, they would have at least postponed the election of Ferdinand indefinitely, and united the Protestant interest. But the Elector Palatine, led by Christian of Anhalt, could not bring himself to play second fiddle to the elector of Saxony. They wished themselves to be emperor-makers. Christian of Anhalt had gone a weary journey to Turin to

Ferdinand elected Emperor, 1619.

try and make terms with Charles Emmanuel of Savoy. Maximilian of Bavaria was sounded, but gave a definite refusal, and so it happened that when the electoral diet met on the 20th of July, the Calvinists were without a candidate and without a policy. John George, nettled at seeing his own policy contemptuously set aside and nothing put in its place, shrank from intrusting the institutions of the Empire to such rash and incapable hands. He instructed his representative to withdraw his objection to the vote of Ferdinand for Bohemia, and to record his own vote in his favour. Frederick and the elector of Brandenburg, seeing that a majority was now obtained irrespective of Ferdinand's own vote, made a virtue of necessity. On the 28th of August Ferdinand was unanimously elected, and all that Christian and Frederick had achieved by their notable policy was to attach John George firmly to the Emperor's side.

The evil consequences of this suicidal step were quickly seen. Ten days before Ferdinand was elected at Frankfort he had been solemnly deposed at Prague. On the 27th of August the Elector Palatine was elected king of Bohemia in his place, and was called upon to decide whether or not he would accept the Crown. The decision was a momentous one. No longer could the question be treated merely as one between the House of Austria and one of its dependencies, if the struggle against Ferdinand was to be headed by the leader of the Calvinists and an elector of the Empire. German interests of the greatest magnitude were involved. In such a quarrel the welfare of Germany was no less at stake than that of Austria or of Bohemia. If Frederick and the Calvinists successfully established themselves in Bohemia, the balance of power at present existing among the princes of the Empire and the two divisions of the Protestant world would be rudely shaken, and the traditional leadership of the German Protestants would pass

Deposition of Ferdinand as king of Bohemia by the revolutionary party. Election of Frederick Elector Palatine.

Importance of the crisis.

from Dresden to Heidelberg. Men were not prepared to see Christian of Anhalt the dictator of Germany, or Geneva victorious over Rome and Wittenberg alike. On the other hand, was it likely that Maximilian of Bavaria and the ecclesiastical princes would stand tamely by while the champion of their religion was dispossessed of his territories and his power scattered to the winds? Nor did the danger end there. Spain had already sent money and troops to the aid of Ferdinand,—would she be deterred by the prospect of the English marriage alliance, so strenuously urged upon her by James I., from throwing her whole weight into the struggle, when it once became clear that the war was a war of religion as much as a war of politics? Would the Pope hesitate to preach a crusade against the aggression of Frederick, and prepare a second St. Bartholomew for the Calvinists of Germany? And if the Catholic powers banded themselves together against the Elector, and determined to risk all rather than suffer the tide of the Counter-Reformation to be forced back, could James I. himself be so deaf to natural affection, so unmindful of the traditions of England, so careless of English opinion, as to refuse to draw the sword to save his son-in-law and Protestantism from ruin at the hands of Spain and the Pope? Sober men asked themselves these questions. Before their frightened eyes rose the spectre of a religious war which should desolate not merely Germany but Europe. They applied themselves earnestly but unavailingly to make Frederick understand the gravity of the situation. His own mother and councillors, the ambassador of France, even the landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, urged him to decline the tempting offer. Only Christian of Anhalt and his followers shut their eyes to the inevitable and forced him on. Frederick himself wished to delay his answer until he could find out from England if his father-in-law would support him, but delay would not suit the Bohemians or Christian of Anhalt. Urged on by his own vanity and his leader's ambition, he plunged blindly into

Acceptance of the Crown of Bohemia by Frederick.

the abyss which opened out before him. On the 25th of September 1619, he formally notified his acceptance to the Bohemian diet, and on the 4th of November was crowned with great state in the cathedral of Prague.

The evil consequences which had been threatened at once made their appearance. James I. had never approved of the Bohemian revolution, but he had endeavoured to make use of it in order to mediate between Catholics and Protestants in Germany and establish peace. His son-in-law's rash act destroyed at once what little chance of success James might have had. But there was worse still behind. It was bad enough that Frederick should have dared to act on his own responsibility, before James had had sufficient time to decide from a study of the Bohemian constitution whether the Bohemian revolution was legally justifiable or not. It was worse still that he should have taken a step which might alarm the susceptibilities of Spain, and endanger the success of the negotiations for a marriage between the prince of Wales and the infanta Maria of Spain, upon which James had set his whole heart. James at once repudiated all complicity with his son-in-law's conduct, and was fretfully indignant with him for having by it injured his own pet scheme for Europe. If all hope of assistance from England was gone, still less chance was there of aid from Savoy, or from the Lutheran princes of Germany. The Protestant Union only agreed to defend the Elector's hereditary dominions, in case they were attacked while he was occupied in Bohemia. Frederick had to face the coming struggle with his own resources. Even Bethlen Gabor, the drunken but able prince of Transylvania, who had taken advantage of Ferdinand's weakness to advance to the gates of Vienna, pillaging as he went, deserted the cause of the Bohemians when he found he could obtain no money from them. On the 17th of January 1620 he made a treaty with the Emperor, by which he was secured in the sovereignty over the larger part of Christian Hungary. Ferdinand on the

Alienation of England and the Lutheran Princes.

other hand had no difficulty in obtaining allies, when once it had been recognised how great a menace to German institutions was implied in the action of the Elector Palatine. Maximilian of Bavaria took the lead. Stipulating as his reward the electoral hat which was to be torn from the head of Frederick, and the right of occupying upper Austria as security for his expenses, he placed his army and the resources of the League at Ferdinand's disposal. In March 1620, under his auspices, a meeting of the League was arranged with the elector of Saxony at Mülhausen, and an agreement arrived at by which the League undertook not to attempt to recover the lands of the Protestant bishops and administrators in north Germany, as long as they continued loyal to the Emperor. This arrangement, though no solution of the question of the ecclesiastical lands, secured at any rate for the time the neutrality of Saxony and the Lutheran princes. The Pope sent money to swell the resources of the League, and Philip of Spain agreed to march troops from the Netherlands to attack the Palatinate.

Alliance between Ferdinand, the League, Spain and the Pope.

The campaign of 1620 opened, therefore, under very different circumstances from those of 1619. The war had already become a German war. With the certainty of the intervention of Spain and the Pope, with the possibility of that of England, it threatened to assume an European character. With the League on the one side and the Union on the other, it was a war of creeds. From a military as well as a political point of view, the accession of Maximilian of Bavaria to the cause of the Emperor made all the difference. Weak in health, and unpleasing in appearance, he concealed under an insignificant exterior an iron will and a faultless judgment. He alone among his contemporaries in Germany had the statesman's faculty of knowing exactly what was possible. He never struck except to succeed. He never ventured without being sure of his ground. Succeeding to an

The war national and religious.

Importance of Bavaria. Policy of Maximilian.

impoverished exchequer, and a territory disjointed in extent and divided in religion, he had set before himself as the objects of his policy, the supremacy of Catholicism, the consolidation of his dominions, and the acquisition of the electoral dignity. By thrift and good management he had amassed considerable treasure, and had carefully trained a powerful army, which he had intrusted to the command of the Walloon Tilly, who had the reputation of being the greatest general of the day. His opportunity was now come, and he threw himself zealously into the war of ambition and religion with the proud consciousness that he was the real leader of the Catholic cause and the saviour of the House of Austria. In June the toils began to close round the ill-fated Frederick. Philip III., convinced through Gondomar's diplomacy that James I. would not break his neutrality even though the Palatinate was invaded, sent the necessary orders to Spinola, and by August the Spanish army was at Mainz. At the end of June, Tilly crossed the frontier into Austria, effected a junction with Bucquoi, and advanced slowly into Bohemia, capturing the towns as he went, and driving the enemy back upon Prague. On November 8th, he came in sight of the city, and found Christian of Anhalt and the Bohemian army drawn up on the White Mountain just outside the walls. Regardless of Bucquoi's desire for delay, Tilly insisted on an immediate attack. Frederick was inside the city when the attack began. Hurrying out to put himself at the head of his troops, he found he was already too late. The army was flying in panic from the face of Tilly's veterans. Frederick himself was hurried away in the crowd. His own dominions were already in the possession of the Spaniards. An outcast and a fugitive, he fled for his life through Germany, and rested not till he found an asylum with Maurice of Nassau at the Hague. He will only be a winter-king, the Jesuits had sneeringly said, when the summer comes he will melt away. The prophecy was fulfilled almost to the letter, save that it was not the heat

Battle of the White Mountain, 1620.

of summer but the floods of autumn which swept him to his destruction.

The victory of the White Mountain marks the end of the attempt of Protestantism to establish its supremacy in Bohemia. Ferdinand at once sent for the Royal Charter and tore it up with his own hands. The leaders of the revolution were executed, and their lands confiscated. Frederick was placed under the ban of the Empire, and his lands and titles declared to be forfeited. The Protestant clergy were for the most part banished, and a heavy war indemnity exacted from the rebels whose lives and possessions were spared. A new race of landowners, Catholic and German, became the possessors of the confiscated lands, and by their means Catholic worship was gradually restored throughout the country districts. Jesuit colleges were planted in the chief towns to complete by persuasion what force had begun, and before another generation had passed away Bohemia was definitely ranged among the Catholic countries of Europe. Only Silesia and Lusatia succeeded in retaining something of their old rights and much of their old religion. The war against these allies of Bohemia had fallen to the lot of John George of Saxony, and when the battle of the White Mountain had made it plain that they must treat for peace, they did not find the Lutheran leader a hard taskmaster. On his own responsibility, he concluded peace with the Silesian estates by an instrument known as the Accord on January 21st, 1621, by which they recognised Ferdinand as their duly elected and crowned king and supreme duke, and agreed to pay a fine of 300,000 florins on condition that their political and religious liberties were respected. Ferdinand when he heard of this was naturally very angry at the mention of the words 'elected king,' but found it prudent to accept the treaty rather than affront the elector of Saxony.

Suppression of Protestantism in Bohemia.

Toleration granted to Silesia, 1621.

By the beginning of 1621, Ferdinand and Maximilian found their policy completely crowned with success. The

Bohemian revolution was crushed, the lower Palatinate was in the hands of the Spaniards, Frederick had been declared to have forfeited his electoral dignity, the Counter-Reformation was victorious in Austria, Moravia, and Bohemia. In April 1621 the Protestant Union itself was dissolved. Yet there were rocks ahead which would require very careful seamanship to avoid. The Spanish court was indignant at the idea of the transference of the Palatine Electorate to Bavaria. James of England was so moved by the seizure of his son-in-law's hereditary dominions, that he authorised the enlistment of Englishmen under Vere to defend the lower Palatinate against Spinola, and made its restoration to Frederick the central point of the long negotiations he was carrying on with Spain for a family alliance. The truce of Antwerp between the Spaniards and the Dutch had just come to an end by lapse of time, and Maurice of Nassau was minded to place his unrivalled military talents in the scale against the House of Austria. The German princes of the Rhineland were frightened at the success of the League, and were looking out for allies even beyond the limits of Germany. But at present no one stirred except the margrave of Baden-Durlach and Christian of Brunswick, both of whom held large estates which had been secularised since the peace of Augsburg, and were consequently in danger from the success of the Counter-Reformation. Christian, besides being Protestant bishop of Halberstadt, was a military adventurer of the knight-errant pattern. He liked fighting for its own sake and loved still better to surround it with a halo of romance. Fired by a glance from the beautiful eyes of the queen of Bohemia, and wearing her glove on his helmet, he posed before the world as the chivalrous protector and avenger of beauty in misfortune. The new allies of Frederick did not avail him much. In October 1621, Mansfeld had to abandon the upper Palatinate and take refuge across the Rhine in Alsace. In the summer of 1622, in conjunction with the margrave of Baden and Christian of

Continued success of Ferdinand and Maximilian, 1621-1622.

Brunswick, he advanced to the recovery of the lower Palatinate, but Tilly crushed the margrave at Wimpfen on the Neckar on May 6th, and Christian at Höcht on the Main on the 20th of June. Christian and Mansfeld with the remnants of their armies had to retire across the Rhine into Lorraine, where they lived at free quarters upon the wretched inhabitants. On September 16th Heidelberg surrendered to Tilly, and on November 8th Mannheim followed the example of the capital, and by the end of the year Frankenthal was the only city in his hereditary dominions which still belonged to the unfortunate Elector. Deprived of his land and his resources, he was now obliged to deprive himself of his own remaining army, and formally dismissed from his service Christian of Brunswick and Mansfeld on finding himself without authority over them and yet looked upon by Europe as responsible for their crimes. Fortune had still one more blow in reserve. On February 13th, 1623, Ferdinand, having succeeded in pacifying the opposition of the elector of Saxony and the Spaniards, solemnly transferred the electorate to Maximilian of Bavaria for his life at the meeting of the diet at Regensburg, and gave him the administration of the upper Palatinate as additional security for the expenses of the war.

Transference of the Electorate from Frederick to Maximilian, 1623.

The transference of the electorate to Maximilian of Bavaria fitly marks the close of the first act of the great drama of the Thirty Years' War, namely, that signalised by the Bohemian Revolution, for he was the person to whom the success achieved was due. His army had won the victories, his head had directed the policy, his purse had paid the soldiers—could he only now have enforced a peace upon a reasonable basis, he would have stood forth before the world as the greatest statesman in Germany, and the saviour of the House of Austria. The difficulties in the way were serious. The Dutch, since the expiration of the truce of Antwerp, had

Extension of the war to Northern Germany, 1623-1624.

been at open war with the Spaniards, and at the beginning of 1623, being hard pressed by Spinola, summoned the brigand bands of Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick to their aid. Insensibly the war was beginning to affect the north German princes. Many of them felt that if the Emperor succeeded in crushing the bishop of Halberstadt, other Protestant bishoprics might prove too tempting a prey to be resisted, and rallied to the standard of Christian. The lower Saxon circle, animated by similar fears, actually began to arm. With these dangers looming in the distance, it was impossible for the League to lay down its arms. Even the crushing defeat inflicted by Tilly upon Christian of Brunswick at Stadtlohn in the bishopric of Münster in August 1623 was not a sufficient guarantee of peace, whilst Mansfeld was still at large; and so the war simmered on through 1623 and 1624, and the opportunity for a satisfactory peace in which German interests alone should be consulted passed away never to return.

Ere the first day of 1625 had dawned it was too late. Germany was already the prey of foreign intervention, but it was as yet the intervention of foreigners who had distinct interests in Germany. James of England had at last been forced to acknowledge the hopelessness of trying to settle the affairs of Europe after his own wishes, by means of an alliance with Spain. The rash visit of prince Charles and Buckingham to Madrid in 1623 had at length opened their eyes to the fact, which all the rest of the world had understood long ago, that Spain only valued the negotiations for the proposed alliance as a means of preventing James from drawing his sword in the German quarrel, and the alliance itself as a stepping-stone to the eventual recovery of England to the obedience of the Pope. Angry at the discovery, the prince and the favourite pushed the old and timid king unwillingly into war. In 1624 English envoys hurried between the courts of Sweden and Denmark and the princes of the lower Saxon circle, eager to negotiate a general alliance to win back the Palatinate. James himself received Mansfeld

Interference of England, 1624.

graciously in London, permitted him to enlist 20,000 men for the war in the Palatinate, and obtained permission from Louis of France for the army to march through France to its destination. The English dockyards resounded with preparations for a great maritime expedition against the ports of Spain and the treasure ships from the Indies. In March 1625, James died, and Charles and Buckingham, no longer hampered by an old man's caution, threw themselves into the German war with a lightness of heart and want of foresight worthy of Frederick himself. Christian IV. of Denmark was the victim who fell into the trap which was so innocently but unerringly laid. He, like other Lutheran princes, had watched with nervous anxiety the spread of the war into northern Germany, and had winced under the blow dealt to the Lutheran cause by the establishment of Catholicism by Ferdinand and Maximilian in Bohemia and the upper Palatinate. He was nearly concerned too in the question of the ecclesiastical lands, for he had secured for one of his sons the Protestant bishopric of Verden and the succession to that of Bremen. So when the offer came from England to pay him £30,000 a month, in addition to the sending of the naval expedition against the coasts of Spain, Christian felt that religion and interest combined to urge him to action. In May 1625, a treaty was made on those terms between Charles I. of England, Christian of Denmark, and the lower Saxon circle, and the first instalment of the English subsidy was duly paid.

Interference of Denmark, 1625.

Alliance of England, Denmark, and part of north Germany against the Emperor and Spain, 1625.

Ill-success dogged their well-meant efforts from the first. In the previous year, Louis had at the last moment found reasons to recall his verbal permission to Mansfeld to cross the soil of France, and the troops had been sent instead into the Low Countries, where, unpaid and unprovided with necessaries, they fell victims to disease. The naval expedition, which, under Wimbledon's leadership, arrived at Cadiz in the October of 1625, achieved nothing but disaster and contempt.

In England quarrels broke out between Charles and his Parliaments, which effectually prevented the payment of the promised subsidies to Christian IV. Nevertheless the united forces of Mansfeld, Christian of Brunswick, and Christian of Denmark, ill provided as they were, far outnumbered the army of Tilly and the League, and it was clear to Ferdinand and Maximilian that with discontent seething in Silesia, Bohemia, and Austria, with Bethlen Gabor again threatening the frontiers of Hungary, and the Danish forces invading upper Germany, it was absolutely essential to place another army in the field. Yet where was it to come from? The Emperor could not stoop to employ a brigand army paid by plunder like that of Mansfeld, but the resources of Maximilian and the League were strained to the utmost. Spain, threatened alike by England and France, could spare nothing, and Ferdinand's treasury was as usual empty.

Difficulties of Ferdinand.

It was in this crisis that a man stepped forward to the help of Ferdinand, who is in some ways the most interesting figure of the Thirty Years' War. Albert von Waldstein, or Wallenstein, was the younger son of an illustrious Bohemian family of Sclavonic blood. Educated partly by the Moravian Brethren and partly by the Jesuits, he never surrendered himself dogmatically to either creed, but out of the mysticism of both constructed for himself a religion, which, not unlike that of Napoleon afterwards, chiefly expressed itself in an unfailing belief in his own star. Thus removed somewhat apart from the controversies of the day, he was able to see more clearly through the mists which darkened the eyes of ordinary politicians. Statesmanship as well as interest and tradition led him to devote himself to the cause of the Emperor, as the one stable element in Germany among the disintegrating influences of rival religions and personal jealousies. True patriotism made common cause with ambition to urge him to risk much to keep the foreigner out of Germany. Common sense allied with dogmatic indifference made him see more clearly than others, that in toleration

Wallenstein.

for all creeds lay the only possibility of civil unity. But statesman and patriot though he was in his conception of the real needs of Germany and the necessity of resisting foreign interference, his statesmanship and his patriotism were never allowed to free themselves from the trammels of an over-mastering ambition. In the settlement of Germany, it was he who was to dictate the terms. In the ousting of the foreigner and the crushing of the factions, it was he who was to receive the lion's share of the spoil. He was an imperialist, but only on condition of military independence. He was a patriot, but only on condition of being also a dictator. As long as the stream of his own policy and personal aggrandisement flowed in the same channel with that of the Emperor and his allies, all would be well. But should they diverge, Germany could no more contain a Ferdinand and a Wallenstein, than France could afterwards contain a Directory and a Napoleon.

Such difficulties were, however, in the womb of the future. For the present Ferdinand required a disciplined army and a capable general, and had not the means to provide himself with either. Wallenstein offered to raise 20,000 men without putting any additional strain on the treasury of the Empire, provided he might be allowed to support them by requisitions on the country in which they were quartered. As with Napoleon, war was to support war, not by the unlicensed waste and brutal plunder of a Mansfeld, but by orderly and methodical requisitions couched in the form of law. The Emperor accepted the conditions, though he well knew that the constitution of the Empire gave him no authority to levy requisitions. Directly the standard of Wallenstein was raised men flocked to it from all sides. Soldiers of fortune, peasants ruined by the war, younger sons who had to make their own way in the world, adventurers of all religions, and all nationalities, hastened to serve under a leader who had already carved for himself by his sword and his wits a colossal fortune out of the spoils of the Bohemian revolution. In the autumn of 1625, he found

Character of Wallenstein's army.

himself at the head of an army of 50,000 men, whose only bond of union was their allegiance to himself, and he advanced into the dioceses of Magdeburg and Halberstadt and spent the winter there in training his forces for the coming struggle.

The plan of campaign arranged by the king of Denmark and his allies was a simple one. Christian himself, with his own troops and those paid by the English subsidies, was to advance up the Weser against Tilly and the army of the League, thus securing the bishoprics of Bremen and Verden, and driving the enemy, as it was hoped, out of Halberstadt back to the line of the Main. Meanwhile Mansfeld was to operate against Wallenstein on the Elbe, push him back into Bohemia, and force him either to let go his hold upon the upper Palatinate, or lay Vienna open to a combined attack from the army of Mansfeld and that of Bethlen Gabor, who was again stirring on the side of Hungary. The plan, however, was better conceived than executed. No subsidies arrived from England, and Mansfeld had to begin his attack without the co-operation of Christian. Wallenstein awaited him withdrawn behind the line of the Elbe, having carefully fortified the bridge of Dessau, which was the key of his position. On April 25th, Mansfeld dashed himself in vain against the fortifications of the bridge, and Wallenstein, seizing the moment when the enemy, thrown into confusion by the repulse, was retiring in some disorder, took the offensive, and by a brilliant counter-attack turned the repulse into a complete rout. **The campaign of 1626.**

Foiled in his attempt to force Wallenstein's position on the Elbe by a front attack, Mansfeld now determined to turn it, and by making a long flank march through discontented Silesia, to effect a junction with Bethlen Gabor in Hungary, and advance upon Vienna from the east. The plan was not creditable to Mansfeld's military genius. A long flank march, in the presence of a victorious force acting on interior lines, is one of the most hazardous operations in war; and with an army of soldiers of fortune dependent on plunder for their

support, and ignorant of discipline, was doomed to certain failure. Wallenstein, leaving 8000 men to co-operate with Tilly against Christian, contented himself with moving slowly after Mansfeld on an interior circle covering Vienna, and finally entrenched himself at Gran on the Danube, about half-way between Pesth and Pressburg, where he awaited the combined attack. Mansfeld did not dare to risk another bridge of Dessau with his attenuated and dispirited force, recruited though it was by the half barbarous levies of the Transylvanian prince, while Bethlen himself saw that he could gain more by negotiation than by war. A truce was quickly made by which Mansfeld was obliged to leave Hungary. Ill in mind and body, the indefatigable adventurer attempted to make his way across the mountains to Italy in the depth of winter, in the hope of stirring up the Republic of Venice to greater exertions, but as he struggled on through Bosnia, death overtook him on the 30th of November. Thus suddenly disappeared from the scene one who by his military talents had been the chief obstacle to the success of the imperialists, and by his total want of morality and patriotism had been the greatest foe to the peace of Germany. His removal unfortunately came too late. The dragon's teeth which he had sown produced a crop of military adventurers all over the soil of Germany as reckless and as able as himself, and already round the carcase of prostrate Germany were gathering the foreign powers, who did not scruple to use such auxiliaries for their own selfish purposes. For the moment the death of Mansfeld made the restoration of peace between the Emperor and Bethlen Gabor more easy, and on the 28th of December the treaty of Pressburg was signed by which Bethlen was to retain the sovereignty over the thirteen counties of Hungary, and the army of Mansfeld was disbanded.

Death of Mansfeld, 1626.

Meanwhile the forces of the League had achieved a still greater success on the Weser. Christian IV. could not complete his armament without the English subsidies, but no money

came, or could come, from England, where Charles I. was quarrelling with one Parliament after another. Tilly accordingly advanced slowly down the Weser and captured Minden and Göttingen. After the defeat of Mansfeld at Dessau, he was further reinforced by 8000 men from Wallenstein's army, and Christian felt that if he was to assume the offensive at all, there was no time to be lost. Accordingly in August he hastily advanced into Thuringia, hoping to throw himself upon Tilly and crush him before the imperialist forces arrived, but he was too late. The junction was effected on the 22d of August, and Christian finding himself in the presence of superior numbers retreated. Tilly at once followed, overtook the Danish army on the 26th of August at Lutter, just as it was about to plunge into a narrow defile, and inflicted upon them a severe defeat. Christian, leaving 8000 men and all his artillery on the field of battle, and 2000 prisoners in the enemies' hands, retired into Holstein and Mecklenberg, while Tilly overran the duchy of Brunswick and quartered his men for the winter along the lower Elbe, and an imperialist detachment occupied the mark of Brandenburg.

Battle of Lutter.

In the next year the tide of victory rolled on. Wallenstein, now made duke of Friedland, marched into Silesia with irresistible forces, and sent fifty standards to Vienna as evidence of his conquest. Then, joining hands with Tilly on the lower Elbe, the united armies poured into Holstein, and overran Denmark until stopped by the sea, and forced the unfortunate Christian to take refuge in the islands. In February 1628, Ferdinand, following the precedent of the Elector Palatine, put the dukes of Mecklenberg to the ban for the assistance they had given to Christian, declared their lands forfeited, and authorised Wallenstein to occupy and administer them in pledge for the expenses incurred. Sweeping over the country the imperial general seized upon the ports of Wismar and Rostock, obliged the duke of Pomerania to put the long coast line of his duchy under the care of the imperial troops, and was only checked

Further successes of Tilly and Wallenstein.

in his career of conquest in March 1628 by the marshes and the fortifications of Stralsund. For five long months the imperialist army lay before the city, attempting the almost impossible feat of the capture of a defended city open to the sea by an attack from the land side only, for none knew better than Wallenstein himself the importance of the issue. All the southern coast of the Baltic from Dantzig to Lübeck, except Stralsund, owned his authority. Across the water lay the only foe he had now to fear. Sovereignty over the Baltic as well as over the Baltic provinces was necessary to him if he was to be safe from the attacks of Sweden. To further this policy, he had already obtained from the Emperor the title of admiral of the Baltic, and he was negotiating with the Hanse towns to provide him with a fleet, which should make the title something of a reality. As long as Stralsund afforded to the enemy an open door into the heart of Germany, the first steps necessary to gain that sovereignty were not complete. Nor was that all. Hitherto the opposition to the Emperor in Germany had been led by furious partisans like Christian of Anhalt, military adventurers like Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick, or self-seeking politicians like Christian of Denmark and the other holders of the ecclesiastical lands. The German people and the cities of Germany had, as a rule, kept themselves aloof from the struggle, or extended their sympathies to the Emperor as the representative of order. But the siege of Stralsund showed that new forces were coming into play. It was the citizens, not their leaders, who insisted on fighting to the last gasp. The independent spirit of civic liberty was determined not to submit to a military dictatorship. The religious spirit of staunch Protestantism was determined not to make terms with the victorious Counter-Reformation. When Wallenstein, foiled and exasperated, drew off his army on August 3d from before the walls of Stralsund, he at least understood that among the cities of Germany there were those who would throw themselves into the arms of the foreigner, and risk all they had,

Siege of Stralsund, 1628.

rather than submit to military government and religious persecution. Nor was Stralsund alone in its victory. Glückstadt proved to Tilly as difficult a morsel to digest as Stralsund had been to Wallenstein, and in January 1629 he was forced to raise the siege. Matters had now reached a deadlock. Christian could not venture on the mainland and his enemies could not reach him at sea. Wallenstein saw the importance of bringing the Danish war to an end before Sweden appeared on the scene, and opened negotiations for peace. In May the treaty of Lübeck was signed. Christian surrendered all his claims upon the ecclesiastical lands in Germany and received back his hereditary dominions.

The peace of Lübeck, 1629.

Ten years had elapsed since the fatal day when the revolted Bohemian diet elected Frederick, Elector Palatine, to the throne of Bohemia, and the margrave of Anspach had exultingly cried, 'Now we have the means of upsetting the world.' In those ten years the German world had indeed been upset but not in the sense of the margrave's prophecy. It was the very fact that in their attack upon the House of Austria the Calvinists were attempting to upset the world of Germany, were attempting to revolutionise German institutions, and were not in any way representing the rights of Protestantism, or the independence of the German princes, that deprived them of support in Germany outside their own body. Cautious and shrewd rulers like John George of Saxony looked upon them as the party of anarchy, and upon the Emperor as the representative of order. The recklessness with which Frederick and his advisers let Mansfeld and Christian of Brunswick loose upon the unoffending people, and outraged the sacred name of religion with burning homesteads and tortured peasants, lost them the respect of every right-thinking man. Men felt that to revolutionise Germany and to plunder Germans was not the way to defend the cause of Protestantism, and welcomed the successes of Maximilian and the League in Bohemia, and even in

Causes of the Imperialist success.

the Palatinate, as securities for the restoration of order upon the traditional lines.

But since then a great change had taken place. The advent of Wallenstein upon the scene, with his personal army and transcendent military talents, brought new forces into play. Germany found itself threatened by the rule of the sword. Ferdinand found at his back a power capable of enforcing his will upon Germany, and, if need be, of superintending the reconciliation of German Protestantism to the Church. After the peace of Lübeck, who was to say him nay if he boldly entered upon a policy of Catholic aggression? The Protestant sympathies of his Austrian subjects had been drowned in blood. In Bohemia and Moravia, under their new Catholic landowners, Protestantism was suppressed, and all Protestants had been banished by the Reforming Commissions issued under the new constitution in 1627. Silesia had lately felt the heavy hand of Wallenstein and was in no condition to rebel. The upper Palatinate and part of the lower, lately made over to Maximilian, were already being rapidly converted to Catholicism. Secure then in his own dominions and sure of Maximilian's support, what opposition was he likely to receive in Germany? The smaller princes of north Germany had been for the most part implicated in the Danish war, and their lands were in the occupation of the armies of the Emperor and of the League. John George of Saxony, the elector of Brandenburg, and the duke of Pomerania, were not likely at such a time to forfeit the protection of the agreement of Mülhausen, which had been faithfully observed on both sides hitherto. Possibly a few free cities, such as Magdeburg and Hamburg, might object, and the king of Sweden across the water might interfere, but no great end was ever achieved without running some risk. In 1627 the Catholic electors and the duke of Bavaria had urged upon Ferdinand that the time was now come to assert the rights of the Church under the peace of Augsburg, and Ferdinand was too strongly himself in favour

Change brought about by Wallenstein and his army.

of the policy to say that they were wrong. On March 29th, 1629, he issued the Edict of Restitution, restoring to the Church all the land secularised since the peace of Augsburg was signed. At one stroke the archbishoprics of Magdeburg and Bremen, the bishoprics of Minden, Verden, Halberstadt, Lübeck, Ratzeburg, Misnia, Merseburg, Naumburg, Brandenburg, Havelberg, Lebus and Camin, and about one hundred and twenty smaller foundations were taken away from their Protestant bishops and administrators, and restored to the Church. Never was greater mistake made. To resume lands in the name of the law, which had been from fifty to eighty years in the undisputed possession of Protestant holders, was in itself a straining of the letter of the law in violation of its spirit, which only intensified the sense of wrong brought about by the confiscation. In itself it armed the public opinion of all Germany against the Emperor. It roused the ardent Protestants to frenzy. But to do it in dependence on mere brute force was political suicide. Without the armies of Tilly and Wallenstein the Edict of Restitution was a dead letter, with them it was a military revolution. By it the Emperor stood out to the world as the author of a religious and political revolution, the success of which depended entirely upon military despotism, and was without any moral basis whatever. Germany would not be revolutionised by such measures as these.

The Edict of Restitution, 1629.

CHAPTER V

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR FROM THE PEACE OF LÜBECK TO THE PEACE OF PRAGUE

Difference between Wallenstein and the Emperor—Opposition of the League to Wallenstein—Dismissal of Wallenstein—Critical state of Protestantism in Germany—Condition of Sweden—Policy of Gustavus Adolphus—His wars with Denmark, Russia, and Poland—His interference in Germany and Alliance with France—The Campaign of 1631 and sack of Magdeburg—Alliance between Saxony and Sweden—Battle of Breitenfeld—Military successes and political difficulties of Gustavus—Wallenstein appointed dictator—Gustavus baffled by Wallenstein at Nuremburg—Battle of Lützen—The League of Heilbronn—The murder of Wallenstein—The battle of Nördlingen—The Peace of Prague—Policy of John George of Saxony.

THE recklessness with which Ferdinand had undertaken to revolutionise Germany soon made itself apparent. To crush the political opposition of Denmark and the lower Saxon circle, he had had to call to his aid Wallenstein and his personal army. To carry out the far more difficult task of transferring from Protestants to Catholics large districts of north Germany, which had been for eighty or ninety years in the hands of Protestants, and of forcibly converting to his own religion thousands of Protestant Germans, he had but the same force upon which to rely. It was idle to think that the Edict of Restitution could be carried out without the help of soldiers. It was certain that Tilly and the troops of the League would not suffice to enforce the Edict and resist the threatened advance of Sweden. To whom could the Emperor turn except to Wallenstein and his 60,000 men? Yet it was just here that he

Difference of policy between Wallenstein and Ferdinand.

was least sure of his ground. Wallenstein himself strongly disapproved of the policy of the Edict. It ran counter to the principle of religious equality upon which he had organised his own power. His army was the only place in Europe where Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists met on equal terms and served loyally one with another as comrades. To put an army organised on such a basis to the work of ousting Protestant clergy and superintending conversions would split it to its very foundations. More than that. It was no mere caprice which had led Wallenstein to make religious equality the basis of the organisation of his army. He believed strongly that it was the only possible basis for the reorganisation of Germany, and he looked forward to the time when, as dictator of Germany, he might at the head of an irresistible force impose upon the fanatics of both sides the boons of peace and religious toleration. For the first time in his career his own convictions and his own ambition led away from the policy and interests of his suzerain.

Just at this time the leaders of the League were becoming on their side very much dissatisfied with Wallenstein. They disliked his opinions. They feared his ambition. They distrusted his loyalty. His system of supporting his army by requisitions, though venial enough when exercised at the expense of the Protestant enemy, became sheer plunder when Catholics were the victims. During the winters 1626-27 and 1628-29, his drums had been beating continuously in all the chief towns of Germany, and not unnaturally it appeared intolerable that the Emperor's own general should be even more oppressive to his friends than to his enemies.

Opposition of the League to Wallenstein.

The opposition came to a head at the diet held at Regensburg in July 1630. The lead was taken by Maximilian of Bavaria. Father Joseph, Richelieu's accomplished diplomatist, laboured indefatigably and successfully in fomenting the discontent, and Ferdinand soon found that he had to choose between Wallenstein and

The Diet of Regensburg, 1630.

the League. There was no middle course possible. He must part with one or the other. To a man of lofty soul, high ambition, and bold courage, there was much to attract in the prospect held out by Wallenstein. If Ferdinand could only make up his mind to risk all in order to gain all, throw himself without reserve into Wallenstein's arms, and at the head of 100,000 men impose upon Germany a new constitution, in which the imperial power should be established upon the ruin of that of the princes, a new era would dawn for the Emperor, the supremacy of the House of Austria in Europe would be assured. But a policy such as this was too revolutionary and too venturesome for a conscientious and commonplace nature like that of Ferdinand. It certainly involved the overthrow of the traditional relations between the Emperor and the princes. It certainly necessitated the withdrawal of the Edict of Restitution. It might not improbably make the Emperor the slave of his too successful general instead of the lord of the world. It was not given to Ferdinand to drive the horses of the Sun. For him there was no alternative. He was nothing if not traditionally legal. Wallenstein was the disturber of precedent and law, and Wallenstein must be sacrificed. A few weeks after Gustavus Adolphus had landed on the coast of Pomerania, Ferdinand, at the bidding of the Catholic powers of Germany, dismissed the only general capable of withstanding the Protestant champion.

Dismissal of Wallenstein, 1630.

With the coming of Gustavus Adolphus the war was lifted for a while into a higher region of politics. It became ennobled by higher motives and a greater policy. Hitherto what nobility of motive had been discoverable was all on the Catholic side. The maintenance of the authority of the Emperor and the institutions of the Empire, the establishment of the authority of the Church, in the teeth of a factious and reckless nobility, were at least nobler objects to fight for than the winning of a crown, or the command of an army, or the right to provide for younger

Critical state of Protestantism in Germany.

sons out of secularised church lands. But the victories of Tilly and Wallenstein and the issue of the Edict of Restitution had brought a great change. With Christian of Denmark beaten to his knees, with the troops of the League and the Emperor in occupation of north Germany, with Wallenstein, admiral of the Baltic and duke of Mecklenberg, in possession of the Baltic coast and harbours, the questions at stake were no longer the maintenance of the authority of the Emperor, but the independence of the north German princes, and the sovereignty of the Baltic. By the publication of the Edict of Restitution, not merely were the secularised lands endangered, but Protestantism itself in north Germany was threatened.

The Thirty Years' War is the last of the great wars of religion, and the first of the great wars of politics. In Gustavus Adolphus, the hero of the war, both aspects are united. When he landed in Pomerania in July 1630, he came distinctly as the champion of Protestantism, to save German Protestantism from being overwhelmed by brute force; but he came no less distinctly as the national king of Sweden, to defend and establish that supremacy over the Baltic sea and the Baltic coast, which was essential to the prosperity and existence of his country. It was a defensive war that he came to wage, a war in defence of his religion and in defence of his kingdom, though it necessarily took from the circumstances of the case an aggressive form. Between the policy of Gustavus in 1630 and that of Richelieu in 1635 there is the whole difference between patriotism and aggrandisement.

Objects of Gustavus Adolphus.

No one who looked attentively at Sweden at the beginning of the seventeenth century would for a moment have anticipated the fortune which in fact was about to attend her. Poor in material resources, sadly deficient in roads and means of communication, sparsely populated, frost-bound for half the year, cut off almost wholly by her old conqueror Denmark from the ocean, she seemed to be doomed to be pressed out of existence by her more

Condition of Sweden.

fortunately placed neighbours. From this fate she was saved by one of the most remarkable races of kings of whom history makes mention. From Gustavus Vasa, the emancipator of Sweden from the tyranny of the Danes, who ascended the throne in 1523, to Charles XII., the terror and pride of Europe, who lost his life in 1718, there was not one sovereign of the House of Vasa who did not in some ways show the marks of fine and original genius. Well may the historian of Sweden exclaim, 'The history of Sweden is the history of her kings,' for in few countries have national characteristics and national development been so intimately bound up with the monarchy. Gustavus Vasa achieved the independence of Sweden, and established his new monarchy on the ruins of the Church. Seizing with the eye of a statesman the close affinity between Lutheranism and state power, he introduced the Reformation into Sweden as a political measure, enriching the Crown and purchasing the support of the nobles by the confiscation of the Church lands. From that time Sweden had two enemies to contend against, the hostility of Denmark, and the power of the nobility; to which, under John III., the husband of Catherine Jagellon, the heiress of the Jagellon kings of Poland, a third was added, namely the Counter-Reformation. At the beginning of the seventeenth century this last was the most pressing danger, for Sigismund, the son of John III. and Catherine Jagellon, was an ardent Catholic. He had become king of Poland by election in 1587, and had done much to re-establish Catholicism in that country before he succeeded by inheritance to the crown of Sweden in 1592. On his attempting a similar policy in Sweden he found himself at once opposed by the self-interest of the nobility, who held so large a share of the Church lands, and by a spirit of nationality among the people, who resented the interference of Poles and Italians with a sturdy independence, which reminds us of the hatred of the medieval English for all 'outlandish' people.

The monarchy.

The Lutheran Church.

Attempt of Sigismund to restore Catholicism, 1592-1604.

These feelings found a representative in Charles, the youngest son of Gustavus Vasa, and uncle of Sigismund, who after a brief contest expelled his nephew from Sweden and seated himself on the throne in his stead in 1604.

This dynastic revolution strengthened Sweden by making her religion the symbol and the test of her liberty. Lutheranism became the political as well as the religious faith of the country. It weakened her by adding another to the number of her hereditary foes. If Denmark could not forget that she had once been the ruler of Sweden, neither could Poland forget, at any rate during the life of Sigismund, that her king had by law no less right to rule at Stockholm than at Warsaw. If, however, Charles IX. increased the external he diminished the internal difficulties of his country. Nobles and king had united together against foreign influence, and when raised to the throne, Charles succeeded by his wise administration in making the bond still closer and was able to hand on to his son, the young Gustavus Adolphus, the government of a united and prosperous nation. Nevertheless, patriotic and religious as Sweden was on the accession of Gustavus Adolphus in 1611, she had not yet passed through that crisis common to the infancy of nations, when extension of territory and influence becomes essential to the preservation of national life. Since she had become an independent nation her mineral wealth had been much developed by her kings. Education and civilisation had made great strides. Since she had become Protestant, she had naturally been drawn into political and commercial relations with the English and the Dutch, who were rapidly establishing their commercial supremacy in the northern seas, and especially in the Baltic, on the ruins of the Hansa. But as yet Denmark held the southern provinces of the Swedish peninsula. Only in one place, at the mouth of the river Gota, where the fortress of Elfsborg stood and the houses and wharves of Gottenburg were beginning to rise, did Sweden touch the outer sea. For all practical purposes

Reign of Charles IX., 1604-1611.

Weakness of Sweden.

her trade was a purely Baltic trade, and could only reach the outside world by the permission, and subject to the regulations, of Denmark, who held the Sound and imposed tolls on all ships which passed through.

Within the confines of the Baltic itself the position of Sweden was by no means assured. The coast line which she held was large, but only because it included the inhospitable and semi-barbarous Finland. She had not a city, not even Stockholm, which could vie in riches or in trade with Lübeck or with Dantzig. Since the days of Ivan the Terrible, Russia had made her appearance in the north as a power which must be reckoned with, and threatened to claim her share of the Baltic. In the 'troublous times' which preceded the rise of the Romanoff dynasty Sweden saw her opportunity, and under Eric and Charles IX. had stretched across the sea, and made good her hold over the first of her Baltic provinces in Esthonia and Livonia; but situated as they were between hostile Poland and semi-hostile Russia, they could not be looked upon in any other light than that of an outpost to be withdrawn or reinforced as occasion might serve. Exceedingly precarious therefore was the position of the young monarchy. A combined attack by its three enemies must at any moment destroy it. Steady hostile pressure under the forms of peace might gradually stifle it. Sweden could not be safe until she had obtained supremacy in the Baltic, she could not be prosperous until she had gained free access to the ocean, she could not be dominant in the north until she had secured her supremacy over the Baltic by the acquisition of a substantial foothold on its eastern coast. These were the three main objects of Swedish national policy steadily pursued by Gustavus Adolphus, and after his death by his friend and chancellor Oxenstjerna. They necessitated an aggressive policy. To sit still was to die. The martial instincts and the youth of the king combined with motives of policy to urge him to a bold course, and the nation well understanding the nature of the crisis seconded him nobly.

Policy of Gustavus Adolphus.

Denmark was the foe upon whom Gustavus was called to whet his virgin steel. Taking advantage of the confusion caused by the minority of the new king, Christian IV. had seized upon Elfsborg and Calmar early in 1611. Directly Gustavus had been pronounced of age he marched to recover the fortresses, and learned his first lesson in the art of war in a year of frontier hostilities, which were ended through the mediation of James I. by the peace of Knarod in January 1613. By this treaty Calmar was at once restored to the Swedes, and Elfsborg covenanted to be restored on the payment of a million dollars, which were duly raised and paid in two years. Relieved from all present anxiety from the side of Denmark, Gustavus at once turned his attention to the growing power of Russia, now gathering itself together under Michael Romanoff. In 1614 he invaded Ingria, and spent three years in desultory fighting, in which he was uniformly victorious in battle, and slowly occupied the country. Again England, who had trade relations with Russia, offered her mediation, and by the treaty of Stolbova, signed in February 1617, Sweden obtained from Russia the cession of Ingria and Carelia, thus gaining a continuous coast line on the Baltic from Colmar to Riga, and shutting Russia from the sea altogether. 'The enemy,' said Gustavus triumphantly, 'cannot launch a boat upon the Baltic without our permission.'

War with Denmark, 1611-1613.

War with Russia, 1614-1617.

Hardly was the peace of Stolbova signed, than an invasion of Swedish Livonia by Sigismund of Poland forced Gustavus to enter upon his third war. Poland was a much more difficult nut to crack than Russia had been, for behind Sigismund lay the forces of the Counter-Reformation, but from various circumstances neither side could press the war with vigour. Two armistices (from 1618-1621 and from 1622-1625) interupted its lethargic course, and enabled Sweden to recruit her failing energies, and her king to perfect the improvements in military tactics for which he is famous. In 1625 he resumed the war in earnest, and

War with Poland, 1617-1629.

crossing the Dwina overran and occupied Courland, pushing the Polish generals back into Lithuania. But neither Riga nor any of the Courland towns gave him what he most wanted, a place of first-rate importance, which he might make the centre of his operations; so in the next year he directed his attack on Dantzig, although it involved the violation of the neutrality of his brother-in-law, George William of Brandenburg. Dantzig was a town strongly fortified on the land side. The Swedish fleet was too weak to enforce the attempted blockade by sea. Hence, like Stralsund and La Rochelle, until cut off from the sea it was impregnable. For four weary years Gustavus attempted unsuccessfully to reduce it. Eventually in 1629, when the affairs in Germany rendered it essential for him to have his hands free, he consented to make peace without gaining the desired end. Yet the Polish war was not thrown away. By the treaty of Stuhmsdorf, Sweden gained the whole of Livonia, and some places in Prussia, and by the training both of himself and of his army in the four Polish campaigns, he had unconsciously made Sweden one of the most formidable military powers of the day.

Negotiations between England and Gustavus in 1624.

While the Thirty Years' War was in progress, the eyes both of Catholics and Protestants in Germany had often been turned towards Gustavus in fear and in hope. He himself looked forward with eagerness to the day when his assistance might be necessary, for he longed to cross swords with Tilly and the imperial generals, but it was eagerness tempered with prudence. He would enter into the war at his own time, and on his own terms, or not at all. In 1624 he was asked by England to formulate those terms, and he laid down three conditions as indispensable, that he should have the sole military management of the war, that England should provide the money for 17,000 men, and pay the subsidies for five months in advance, that he should be protected from attack from Denmark, while at war in Germany, and have two ports made over to him to secure his communications. Unlike

Christian of Denmark, he would not be content with fair promises, but insisted on performance before he would move. The terms were too onerous for acceptance at that time, but the fate of Christian proved their wisdom and necessity. The defeat of the Danes, and the establishment of Wallenstein on the Baltic coast, brought the danger nearer home. What chance was there for Sweden to obtain supremacy over the Baltic with Mecklenberg and Pomerania in the hands of the imperial admiral? Clearly she would have to fight for her independence, let alone her religion, if Wallenstein was suffered to make himself duke of Mecklenberg. Gustavus recognised the necessity at once. In April 1628 he made an alliance with his old enemy Christian IV. of Denmark, by which all foreign ships, except those of the Dutch were excluded from the Baltic. In the summer of the same year, he sent 2000 men under Alexander Leslie to defend Stralsund against Wallenstein. In September 1629 he put an end to the Polish war by the treaty of Stuhmsdorf, and on the 24th of June 1630 he landed on the island of Usedom, at the head of an army of 13,000 men, which was raised to 40,000 before the end of the year.

Alliance between Sweden and Denmark, 1628.

Landing of Gustavus in Germany, 1630.

Gustavus timed his invasion with great judgment. The diet of Regensburg was still sitting, and the army of Wallenstein was demoralised by the approaching sacrifice of its chief. Hardly a month after the landing of the Swedish king that sacrifice was consummated, a large part of Wallenstein's army was disbanded, and the rest put under the command of Tilly, who was becoming in his old age extremely dilatory in his movements. Gustavus accordingly found himself for six months practically unopposed, and he at once employed the time in establishing for himself a strong basis of operations on the Baltic and in the enlistment of fresh troops. In January of the next year came a most welcome assistance. Richelieu had long fixed his eyes upon Gustavus.

Measures of Gustavus.

as one of the most formidable weapons capable of being used against the House of Austria, and he desired to put it into the armoury of France. Negotiations had been opened with this object in the spring of the year but had failed. He had found Gustavus more stubborn than he had expected, and quickly realised that if he wanted the king of Sweden's help he could have it only on the king of Sweden's terms. Gracefully submitting to the inevitable, on January 23rd 1631 he concluded with Gustavus the treaty of Bärwalde, by which he undertook to supply the king with 200,000 dollars for six years, on condition that Gustavus maintained an army of 36,000 men, promised to respect the imperial constitution, observed neutrality towards Bavaria and the League as far as they observed it towards him, and left the Catholic religion untouched in those districts where he found it established. The alliance of the foreigner was the only voluntary aid which the liberator of Germany could obtain. The old duke Boguslav of Pomerania was as submissive in the hands of Gustavus as he had been in the hands of Wallenstein, but it was helplessness not friendship which put his resources at the disposal of the invader. John George of Saxony and George William of Brandenburg steadily refused to break their neutrality, or take one step in the direction of the dismemberment of the Empire. In March a great gathering of Protestants was held at Leipzig to consider the situation. They agreed to raise troops for their own defence in case they were attacked. They assured the Emperor of their continued loyalty, if only he would withdraw the Edict of Restitution. They said not one word about assistance to the foreigner.

Alliance between Gustavus and Richelieu, 1631.

Jealousy of Gustavus in Germany.

German patriotic feeling was against Gustavus. It was clear that he would have to make his way by the sword, and the sword alone. At the end of March the campaign began. Tilly suddenly dashed at Neu Brandenburg, captured it on March 29th, and destroyed

The campaign of 1631.

its garrison of 2000 Swedes, thus thrusting himself in between Gustavus in Pomerania and Horn in Mecklenburg. Gustavus saw the danger. By forced marches he succeeded in circumventing Tilly and effecting his junction with Horn, and the old marshal sullenly retreated to the Elbe, where he formed the siege of Magdeburg, which had of its own accord declared against the Emperor, and asked for a Swedish garrison. Meanwhile Gustavus had marched to the Oder, and captured the important fortress of Frankfort, which was garrisoned by the imperialists. From there he designed to move to the relief of Magdeburg, now hard pressed by Tilly and Pappenheim. Every motive of honour and policy impelled him to ensure its safety. But unforeseen obstacles presented themselves. In order to march to Magdeburg, it was necessary to cross the territories of Brandenburg and Saxony, and neither of the electors would for a moment think of permitting an act which might seem to the Emperor a violation of their neutrality. While Magdeburg was in its death throes fruitless negotiations continued. Both the electors remained stubbornly immovable. At last in desperation Gustavus appeared at Berlin with a more potent argument at his back in the shape of an army, and forced the unwilling George William to throw open to him the fortress of Spandau. But it was too late. Saxony had still to be dealt with, and while Saxony was deliberating Magdeburg fell. **Fall of Magdeburg.** On May 20th, Pappenheim stormed the town. Amid the confusion of the assault the houses caught fire. The imperialist soldiers, maddened by victory and plunder, lost all self-control, and amid the roar of the flames and the crash of falling houses ensued a scene of carnage, of outrage, and of horror, at which Europe stood aghast. By the next morning the cathedral alone showed gaunt against the sky, amid a mass of blackened ruins, to say where Magdeburg once had been.

The sack of Magdeburg is one of the darkest spots on the page of history. For many years it has been allowed to stain

the reputation of the veteran Tilly, unjustly, for he was far away at the time, but upon Gustavus must rightly rest some part of the fearful responsibility. Magdeburg had risen against the Emperor trusting in him. He had sent one of his own officers to lead the defence. He knew to what desperate straits the town was reduced, and though he could not have anticipated the actual horrors of the sack, he knew well enough what the storming of a town by soldiers of fortune meant in those brutal days. Yet for two critical months he allowed his march to be checked, and his honour compromised, by the mulish stubbornness of the two electors, who had no force at their command sufficient to resist his advance, had he nobly acted upon the necessity which knows no law. It is just possible that by such an action he might have driven the electors to throw themselves into the arms of the Emperor, but it is not likely. Gustavus had not hesitated in 1626 to seize Pillau by force from the elector of Brandenburg, when he wanted a basis of operations against Dantzig. In this very campaign, when too late, he had to use force to gain possession of Spandau, yet the elector was not moved from his neutrality by either of these high-handed acts. Surely the least which Magdeburg might fairly ask of him in her distress was not to be more scrupulous about violating neutrality for her safety than he had been for his own advantage.

Responsibility of Gustavus.

From a military point of view the loss of Magdeburg was a crushing blow. The incipient movements in favour of Gustavus, which had begun to show themselves among the Protestant towns, at once ceased. No German princes except William of Hesse-Cassel and Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar joined him. As Gustavus slowly fell back down the Elbe, and entrenched himself at Werben, he must have felt that all the imperialist leaders had to do was to leave him alone, and his power would melt away of itself. But to leave things alone was just what Ferdinand and Maximilian in the flush of their anticipated victory could not do. In April peace

Retreat of Gustavus.

had been signed at Cherasco between Ferdinand and France, and the Italian army of the Emperor had now crossed the Alps and reinforced Tilly. Forty thousand men followed his standard, and in the hope of quelling all opposition and ending the war at a blow, orders were sent to the marshal to procure the dismissal of the the Saxon troops, and then to march against the Swedes. But John George unexpectedly resented this interference with his independence. He refused to dismiss his troops. Tilly immediately occupied Merseburg and Leipzig and began harrying the country. The sight of his burning villages, and the invasion of his cherished independence, roused the sluggish elector at last. He sent messengers post haste to Gustavus offering his alliance and demanding his help. By one fatal blunder Ferdinand had done more to destroy his own cause, than all his foes together had hitherto succeeded in doing. He had driven Saxony over to the enemy. It was not so much the material resources which the elector possessed, which made his friendship so important to Gustavus, as the position which he held in Germany. Drunken, sluggish, obstinate, irresolute as he was, men recognised in him a strenuous loyalty to the constitution of the Empire as it then existed, a hearty dread of revolutionary proposals, and a certain political shrewdness. It was these qualities, quite as much as his hereditary position as the leader of the Lutheran party, which had hitherto determined the attitude of the north German princes both towards Frederick and Christian of Denmark. That he should now join his forces to the Swedes meant that to him the foreigner and the invader appeared less of a revolutionary than the legal head of the Empire himself.

Invasion of Saxony by Tilly.

Alliance between Saxony and Sweden.

Gustavus did not let the grass grow under his feet. He set out at once for Saxony with the elector of Brandenburg, effected a junction with the Saxon army, and marching towards Leipsig met the army of Tilly drawn up in battle array on the field of Breitenfeld on

The battle of Breitenfeld.

September 17th, 1631. Tilly marshalled his men to the number of 32,000 in one long line of battle along rising ground overlooking the little stream of the Loderbach. In the centre were posted as usual the solid squares of pikemen flanked by musketeers, which formed the main battle according to the tactics of the Spanish school. On the right wing was Furstenberg with the horse of the Italian army, while the left was guarded by the fiery Pappenheim and his famous cavalry. Between the wings and the centre were placed the heavy guns, probably between thirty and forty in number. Tilly himself on his well-known white horse put himself among his Walloon fellow-countrymen in the centre. The arrangement adopted by Gustavus was somewhat different. The army was drawn up in two lines, with a reserve of cavalry behind each line, and a final reserve also of cavalry behind the centre of the whole army. The extreme left opposed to Furstenberg was occupied by the Saxon troops under the elector in person. On the right of the Saxons, and in touch with the Swedish centre, was Horn with the Swedish cavalry. Gustavus himself took command of the right wing, opposed to Pappenheim, with the rest of the cavalry; but between each division of cavalry on both wings in the first line was a detachment of two hundred musketeers. The infantry occupied the centre, marshalled in very much smaller squares than those of Tilly, and having a much greater proportion of musketeers to pikemen, while in front of each regiment was the light or field artillery. The heavier guns, in all about one hundred, under the command of Torstenson, were placed in the left centre. In numbers Gustavus was decidedly superior. His own army amounted to some 26,000 men while the Saxons could not be less than 15,000. His guns, too, though not so heavy as those of Tilly, were far more numerous, and could fire three shots to one of the imperialists. The wind and the ground favoured Tilly. The battle began with an artillery duel in which the quick-firing Swedish pieces wrought fearful havoc among the dense masses of the imperialist army. Yet the stubborn old marshal

remained immovable amid the hail of the balls. Pappenheim, younger and less disciplined, lost patience. Without orders he suddenly launched his cavalry on the Swedish right, but Gustavus was ready for him. The musketeers received him with a volley which made him reel, and Baner at the head of the reserve cavalry, and Gustavus himself with the right wing, dashed upon him at the moment and drove him fairly off the field. Meanwhile on the extreme imperialist right Furstenberg in his turn threw himself upon the Saxons, drove back their cavalry first on to their guns and then on to their infantry, until the whole mass in wild confusion broke and ran, carrying the elector with them to Duben, and even to Eilenburg, pursued by the victorious imperialists. Tilly saw his opportunity, and ordered his centre to advance to take Horn in the flank left exposed by the flying Saxons, but the well-disciplined and mobile Swedes falling back a little formed a new front on their old flank and defended themselves vigorously. In making this flank movement Tilly had necessarily left his artillery undefended, and Gustavus, checking his pursuit of Pappenheim, wheeled back his cavalry, and sweeping the position originally occupied by Tilly from left to right, captured the guns and turned them against their own masters, while he himself with his horsemen swooped down upon Tilly's rear. Caught between Horn's foot in front and Gustavus's cavalry in the rear, with their own guns directing a plunging fire into their flanks, the imperialist infantry proved themselves worthy of their reputation. They fought like heroes, but the longer they fought the more hopeless became the struggle, the more decisive the defeat. When the autumn sun went down on the field of blood, but six hundred men remained in disciplined array to make a ring round their veteran leader and carry him in safety from the field. The imperialist army was entirely destroyed as a fighting force. About 10,000 men were left on the field of battle, as many more were taken prisoners, and according to the custom of the time took service with the victors. One hundred and six standards and all the guns remained to

grace the conqueror's triumph. Tilly retreated on the Weser, gathering up the fragments of his defeated army as he went, but he found no rest there. Pressed back by the advance of the victorious Swedes to the Danube and even across the Danube, he did not dare to make head against Gustavus again until the following spring.

The victory of Breitenfeld placed all north Germany at the feet of the Swedish king. Perceiving at a glance that even a successful attack upon Vienna would not end the war, and recognising that his first duty was to the troubled Protestants of the centre and of the south, Gustavus marched straight into the heart of Germany on the Main and the Rhine, disregarding the characteristic suggestions of Wallenstein that they should divide Germany between them at the expense of the Emperor and the Catholic party. On October 10th he occupied Würtzburg. The 18th of November saw him at Frankfort on the Main, the old capital of Germany. He spent Christmas Day at Mainz, and there in the fair and rich Rhineland he rested his tired troops, while in the north Tott was completing the reduction of the Mecklenberg coast line, and the Protestant administrators who had been ousted under the Edict of Restitution were being replaced. No one, however, knew better than Gustavus on what slender foundations his power rested. Richelieu was already beginning to think that his ally was becoming too powerful. Louis XIII., it was said, had been heard to mutter 'It is time to put a limit to the progress of this Goth.' Force, far more than inclination or policy, had brought him the Saxon alliance, and force might easily break the bond which it had forged. Tilly was mustering new forces beyond the Danube, and at any moment a general of reputation might stamp his feet and produce an army of soldiers of fortune on his flank or in his rear. Even the Protestants could not be trusted should misfortune come. Except at Nuremberg and a few other places, which had felt the hand of the oppressor, there was no enthusiasm in Germany for the

March of Gustavus to the Main.

Protestant Liberator. Two things were necessary to secure the fruits of the victory which he had won. He must crush the enemy before he had time to recover from the blow of Breitenfeld, and he must gain a basis of military operations and political influence by uniting the Protestant states in a firm league under his leadership. With Tilly destroyed, and the *Corpus Evangelicorum* formed, and trusty Swedish captains placed in occupation of the ecclesiastical lands of central Germany, then and not till then might Gustavus consider his work secure.

His schemes for a general Protestant alliance under Sweden.

The first thing was to crush military opposition. At the end of March the Swedes were again in the field. On the 31st Gustavus entered Nuremberg in triumph and received an enthusiastic welcome. On April 5th he captured Donauwörth, on the 14th he found Tilly entrenched behind the Lech, forced the passage of the river, stormed the enemies' position, and drove back the old marshal to Ingolstadt wounded to death. Bavaria was at his feet. Side by side with the Elector Palatine he rode into Munich on the 7th of May. There was now no enemy left to be dealt with except the Emperor, and the dominions of the Habsburgs were still in far too disorganised a state to be able to offer much opposition. Even the Saxons had marched unopposed into Bohemia, and when Gustavus was celebrating his triumph with the winter-king at Munich, John George, who had done more than any one else to oust Frederick from Bohemia, was keeping high festival himself at Prague.

Advance upon the Danube to Munich, 1632.

It was not for long. There was but one man in all wide Europe who could save Ferdinand from the storm just breaking upon his head, for there was but one capable of drawing to himself and binding together into an organised army the soldiers of fortune who were scattered all over the civilised world. In December, Eggenberg, Ferdinand's most trusted counsellor, had been sent to Wallenstein to ask him to forgive the past and strike

Wallenstein appealed to by the Emperor.

one more blow for the defence of the House of Austria. Wallenstein eagerly seized the opportunity, for circumstances had played singularly into his hand. The victories of Gustavus had drawn the teeth of Maximilian and the League. The necessities of the Emperor must force him to agree to whatever terms were demanded. The long wished for moment had arrived when he at the head of an army, wholly his own, owing no allegiance to the Emperor, might become the dictator of Germany, and, ousting from her soil all foreigners except himself, might impose peace upon Germany on the basis of religious toleration. The terms which he exacted from the Emperor forbid any doubt as to his intentions. No army was to be allowed in the Empire except under his command, he alone was to have the right of pardoning offenders and confiscating lands. The Edict of Restitution was to be withdrawn. In other words, he was to be the military and political dictator of Germany. The terms were accepted, his standard raised. From Italy, Scotland, Ireland, as well as from every part of Germany, flocked to him men eager for distinction and more eager for plunder, without distinction of nationality and without distinction of religion. In May 1632, his organisation was completed. Falling suddenly upon the Saxons at Prague he drove them headlong out of Bohemia, then turning swiftly to the left directed his main army upon the rich and Protestant Nuremberg, while Pappenheim scoured the Rhine country at the head of his horse. Gustavus saw the crisis, threw himself into Nuremberg and fortified it, then, summoning to his assistance his outlying detachments, offered Wallenstein battle in the hope of crushing this new enemy by another Breitenfeld. But Wallenstein had made up his mind to show Gustavus quite another sort of warfare. He knew the great difficulties which the Swedes experienced in conducting their operations in a country, largely hostile, at such a distance from their base. He knew also the value of his own superiority in light cavalry in provisioning his own army, and

His terms.

Appointed dictator.

His plan of campaign.

in hampering the commissariat of the Swedes. He did not trust the discipline of his own recent levies on the battlefield, and so, forming a huge entrenched camp on an eminence overlooking the plain on which Nuremberg stands, he prepared to force Gustavus away by sheer starvation.

At the end of June the camp was finished, and the duel between the two greatest soldiers of the day began. The camp at Nuremberg. But it was not only a duel between soldiers, it was also a duel between rival policies. The crisis of the fate of the Empire was being then decided. On the one side was military dictatorship and religious toleration in connection with the traditional institutions of the Empire, on the other Protestant supremacy and political federation under the leadership of the foreigner. Stubbornly the question was fought out, not by arms but by endurance, but day by day it became clearer that Wallenstein had calculated rightly, and that Gustavus must starve the first. By the beginning of September the strain was growing intolerable, discipline was becoming relaxed, and the king felt that he must stake all on one last attack. On September 3d he led his army against Wallenstein's entrenchments, but in vain. After heroic efforts he had to retire baffled. A few days afterwards Retreat of Gustavus. he marched out of Nuremberg, leaving the best part of his army dead before the ramparts of the Alte Veste, or dying in the hospitals of the town. Wallenstein, following out determinedly the plan he had laid down for himself, never attempted to pursue, but turning north into Saxony prepared somewhat leisurely to choose a position between Invasion of Saxony by Wallenstein. the Elbe and the Saale, where he might entrench himself for the winter, and apply the gentle pressure of his marauding and requisitioning bands to the ever-vacillating will of John George, and detach him from the Swedish alliance. Gustavus had in the previous year lost Magdeburg by a want of decision. He was not going to lose Saxony in the same way. Summoning Oxenstjerna and Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar to his aid, he flew through Thuringia

as quick as he could go, and seized Erfurt and Naumberg before Wallenstein quite realised what had happened. It was now the beginning of November, the weather had suddenly turned piercingly cold, and Wallenstein, making up his mind that Gustavus would not pursue his operations further that winter, prepared to entrench himself between Merseburg and Torgau, and gave permission to Pappenheim to return to the Rhineland capturing Halle as he went. It was a great blunder. Gustavus dashed forwards on Wallenstein's main army to crush it before the mistake could be repaired. Wallenstein finding a battle inevitable sent messenger after messenger to bring Pappenheim back, and hastily throwing up some field entrenchments and deepening the ditches which intersected the plain, awaited the onslaught of the Swedish king at Lützen on the 16th of November.

As at Breitenfeld the Swedes were drawn up in two lines, and the imperialists only in one, but Wallenstein, unlike Tilly, seems to have interspersed bodies of musketeers among the troops of the cavalry, and posted a strong reserve behind his centre. The battle began as usual with the artillery in the early morning, then, as the autumn mist cleared away, the Swedes advanced to the attack about ten o'clock. There was no room for generalship. It was hard hand-to-hand fighting. For two hours the battle swayed backwards and forwards, the hardest of the fighting being on the Swedish right, where the king himself was engaged with Piccolomini's black cuirassiers. Bit by bit the Swedes were gaining ground, when Wallenstein bringing up his reserves directed a terrible charge upon the Swedish centre, and forced it back with fearful loss, especially among the officers. Gustavus, at the head of such horsemen as he could muster, flew to the rescue, and as he made his way through the mist which had gathered again for a few moments in the hollow, found himself unexpectedly in the middle of a troop of the enemy's cavalry. A shot broke his left arm, another pierced his back, and he fell

Battle of Lützen, 1632.

Death of Gustavus.

heavily to the ground, where he was soon despatched by a bullet through the head. His white horse, riderless and blood-stained, tore on through the enemy into the Swedish ranks and announced the loss of their leader. Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar took the command, and rallying the army with the cry of vengeance, renewed the charge with an enthusiasm which carried all before it. Just then Pappenheim and his cavalry appeared on the right flank of the Swedes, and the battle again settled down to hard hand-to-hand fighting for three hours more. Pappenheim himself fell dead in the first charge, but his men, like their enemies, fought on the more fiercely to avenge the fall of their captain. At last as the darkness fell the Swedes nerved themselves for a supreme effort, and drove the imperialists from their entrenchments just as the leading columns of Pappenheim's infantry appeared upon the field.

The honours of the battle were with the Swedes, its fruits were with Wallenstein. As regards mere numbers the Swedish loss was probably heavier than that of the imperialists, and their army more weakened as a fighting force. But if Gustavus had been the only man killed on that side, his death would have more than counter-balanced the whole of the imperialist losses, for not only was he the general and the king, not only was the one man capable of uniting the forces of Protestantism, the one who could successfully cope both with the ambition of Richelieu and the fanaticism of Ferdinand, but he was also the only man still in power in Germany who ennobled the struggle with a distinct moral ideal. Whether Protestants in Germany had sufficient powers of cohesion and strength of conviction to follow a common policy, whether Sweden, even under Gustavus, could have become sufficiently German in interests and sympathies to command the allegiance of Germans, may be doubtful; but at any rate it was a policy worth trying, it was a policy based on the moral and political needs of the people, and not upon the personal ambition of the successful general. If it failed it would fail only because Protestantism

Results of his death.

in Germany had not the qualities necessary to make it succeed. But when Gustavus Adolphus died on the field of Lützen all moral and religious ideal died too out of the Thirty Years' War. On the one side was the personal ambition of a military dictator, on the other the national ambition of a foreign aggressor, and the very followers and companions of the noble Gustavus himself soon sank to be little more than 'condottiere' bent only upon gorging themselves and their country out of the spoils of helpless Germany.

The lead taken by Oxenstjerna.

On the death of Gustavus the supreme direction of Swedish affairs passed into the hands of Oxenstjerna, whose one object was to carry out the policy of his dead friend and king; but Oxenstjerna was no general, and being without the supreme authority which Gustavus wielded, had often to persuade where he would have commanded. His first step showed the change which had taken place. Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, like other military adventurers, required his reward before he would venture his life further in the cause, and a duchy had to be carved for him out of the bishoprics of Bamberg and Würtzburg. It was the first confiscation of Catholic lands by the Protestant forces, the first forcible subjection of a Catholic population to a Protestant ruler. However justifiable it might be as an act of retaliation for the Edict of Restitution, it was but too evident a proof of the increasing tendency to consider the interests of the German people as of no value in comparison with the political and military necessities of their so-called saviours.

The League of Heilbronn, 1633.

Sure of the assistance of Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, Oxenstjerna was enabled to unite the circles of Swabia Franconia and the upper and lower Rhine to Sweden by an offensive and defensive league, which was signed at Heilbronn in April 1633. Bernhard took command of the forces raised by the circles, and prepared in conjunction with the Swedish army to resume the attack on Vienna.

The supreme word on military affairs for the moment lay

not with Bernhard or with Oxenstjerna but with Wallenstein. The death of Gustavus left him, as he well knew, without a rival in Germany, and retiring slowly from Lützen behind the mountains of Bohemia, he surrendered himself to the illusion that he could now dictate peace to Germany on his own terms. Secure, as he thought, of the support of his army, contemptuous of the politics both of Ferdinand and of Oxenstjerna, he prepared to enforce his own conditions of peace upon the Emperor and upon the Swedes alike. The Edict of Restitution was to be withdrawn, the Swedes to be compensated by some places on the Baltic coast, while he himself, the peacemaker, would exchange the duchy of Mecklenberg for the Rhenish Palatinate, or possibly the crown of Bohemia. During the summer of 1633 he was pressing these terms upon Oxenstjerna and upon John George. In June he had almost obtained the consent of the latter, but Oxenstjerna, cautious and hostile, would not trust him. Couriers went quick and often between the two, and rumours of treachery were beginning to be heard behind Wallenstein's back, not merely at Vienna, but, a far more serious thing, in the camp. The more they were canvassed the more did Wallenstein's proposals seem hateful to important interests in Europe. The Jesuits and the Catholics were not willing to give up so soon the policy of the Edict of Restitution. The Spaniards and the French would risk anything rather than see Wallenstein lord of the Palatinate. Conservative statesmen and the loyal soldiers resented the attempt to impose terms on the unwilling Emperor by the brute force of an army nominally his own. The soldiers of fortune, especially the officers, did not want an end put to a war which had been so lucrative and promised to be more lucrative still. In January 1634, the Spaniards were plying the Emperor with accusations, and demanding the dismissal of Wallenstein, just as Maximilian and the League had done four years ago. Wallenstein contented himself with binding his officers closer to him by an

Schemes of Wallenstein.

Opposition of the Jesuits, the Spaniards and the army.

oath. Sure of their support he could face the world. But in the beginning of February his support began to give way underneath him. Piccolomini Gallas and Aldringer deserted him, and Ferdinand boldly threw himself into the arms of the Spaniards.

Dismissal and murder of Wallenstein, 1634.

He dismissed Wallenstein from his command, branded him as a traitor, released his army from its obedience to him, and put a price upon his head. The breach was complete but still Wallenstein did not quail. Summoning the colonels to meet him at Pilsen he obtained from them on February 20th an undertaking to stand by him against his enemies, and moved to Eger to meet Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, in the hope of inducing the Swedes to make common cause with him, and oblige the Emperor to accept the peace. There also came four soldiers of fortune, two Irishmen and two Scots, who, finding in the declaration issued by the Emperor a warrant for their own dark plots, like Fitzurse and his companions five centuries before, determined to take upon themselves the responsibility of ridding their master of too powerful a servant. At nightfall on the 25th of February, Wallenstein's chief supporters were invited to a banquet and there murdered. Devereux, an Irish captain, reeking from the butchery, made his way to the general's quarters, and struck him down to the ground as he arose from his bed alarmed at the noise. So perished Wallenstein in the height of his fame and power, and with him perished the last chance of keeping the foreigner out of Germany.

At first the star of Ferdinand seemed to shine the brighter in spite of the dark shade cast by the murder of Wallenstein.

Battle of Nördlingen, 1634.

The army placed under the orders of the young Ferdinand, king of Hungary, captured Regensburg in July, stormed Donauwörth, and laid siege to Nördlingen. There the king was joined by the cardinal-infant, Ferdinand of Spain, who was on his way to assume the government of the Netherlands, at the head of 15,000 men. In spite of inferior numbers Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, ever

sanguine and ever impetuous, prevailed on the wary Horn, who commanded the Swedes, to risk a battle; but the evening of the 6th of September 1634 saw him a fugitive, and Horn a prisoner with 16,000 men *hors de combat*. The battle of Nördlingen was one of the decisive battles of the war. Just as Breitenfeld had made the conquest of north Germany by the Emperor and the success of the Edict of Restitution impossible, so did Nördlingen render the conquest of south Germany by Protestantism impossible. The Catholic bishoprics were recovered, Bernhard's duchy of Franconia vanished, and the line of the Main became once more the boundary between the religions.

In May 1635, the negotiations for peace which had been going on so long with Saxony were brought to a happy conclusion, and a treaty embodying the terms agreed upon was duly signed at Prague between John George and the Emperor. The question of the ecclesiastical lands was settled by taking the year 1627 as the test year. Whatever belonged to Protestants at that time was to remain Protestant, whatever was then Catholic was to be Catholic still. This arrangement secured nearly all the northern bishoprics to Protestantism. Lusatia was to be made over to Saxony, and Lutheranism in Silesia guaranteed by the Emperor. Lutheranism was still to remain the only privileged form of Protestantism. These conditions were intended to form a basis for a general peace. It was hoped that other states would accept them, and so gradually put an end to the war. To some extent the anticipation was realised. A considerable number of the cities and smaller states of north Germany accepted the treaty of Prague, but that it would ever form a satisfactory basis for a general peace was impossible, as long as it provided no security whatever for the Calvinists, and did not attempt to deal with the dangers of foreign intervention.

Peace of Prague, 1635.

By the treaty of Prague Saxony ranged itself once more upon the side of the Emperor. It is easy to sneer at the want

of public spirit and the narrowness of aim which marked the policy of John George throughout this difficult time. Yet it will be found by an attentive observer that from first to last there was a singular consistency in his action, which sprang not from weakness of will or sluggishness of temperament, but from settled principles of policy from which he never budged. In imperial politics John George was a conservative, in ecclesiastical matters a Lutheran, and he remained steadily, even stubbornly, consistent to those two conceptions. As a conservative and a Lutheran he hated the destructive policy of Christian of Anhalt and Frederick Elector Palatine, and consequently secured to Ferdinand his election to the Empire, and actually supported him in arms against his revolted subjects. When Frederick threw himself into the arms of Mansfeld, when his co-religionists in the north began to feel alarmed, when Christian of Denmark determined to fight for his religion and his son's bishoprics, John George remained sturdily, obstinately, neutral; for he believed that it was better to run some risk of aggression on the part of the Emperor than to throw all the institutions of the Empire into the crucible. The Edict of Restitution was the first thing that shook him, but even that would not have weighed against the danger of allowing the foreigner a footing in Germany, had not the Emperor actually had recourse to violence. If John George had to break his neutrality, if he was obliged to have a hand in the work of destruction of Germany, if conservatism was no longer possible, then he would rather join a Gustavus than a Wallenstein or a Tilly. But he never felt happy in that alliance. His sense of the desolation of the country, of the destruction of war, was too great for him ever willingly to remain long under arms. When the Emperor had been beaten back, when the Edict of Restitution had become an impossibility, when Wallenstein was dead, and France beginning to interfere actively in the affairs of Germany, it was time for John George once more to range himself side by side with the

Policy of John George of Saxony.

Emperor, for once more the Emperor had become the champion of German institutions against revolution. The treaty of Prague represents no high ideals of policy. It shows that the great religious ideals with which the war began are over. No longer do men believe that they are fighting for the Church or for Protestantism, for the highest interests of nations and of souls. Seventeen years of war have disabused them of that illusion. But next to religion among the ennobling influences of life comes that of patriotism, and John George retiring from alliance with the foreigner, as the Swede and the Frenchman prepare to put Germany on the rack for thirteen more weary years for their own aggrandisement, is a figure which shows at any rate something of patriotism and of policy, among the heartless dissensions of ambitious brigand chiefs.

CHAPTER VI

THE AGGRANDISEMENT OF FRANCE

Foreign policy of Richelieu—Territorial aggrandisement—Questions of the Valtelline and the Mantuan Succession—Intrigues of Richelieu in Germany—Interference of France in the Thirty Years' War—Alteration of the character of the war—Unsuccessful operations of France—Conquest of Alsace—Revolt of Portugal and Catalonia—Position of France at the death of Richelieu—Policy of Mazarin—Battle of Rocroy—Conquest of the Upper Rhineland—Campaign of Turenne—Negotiations for peace—The peace of Westphalia—The solution of the religious difficulty—The beginning of modern Europe—Permanent advance of France—Desperate condition of Spain—Outbreak of the Fronde—Alliance of Mazarin and Cromwell—The peace of the Pyrenees.

Foreign policy of Richelieu.

When Richelieu in 1624 took the reins of government into his hands in France, the Thirty Years' War was just about to envelope the whole of Germany in its fell embraces. The princes of the lower Saxon circle had begun to arm, the king of Denmark was about to take the lead of the Protestant forces, England had already taken active steps for the recovery of the Palatinate, and the reduction of the power of Spain. There was every probability that the whole energies of the Austro-Spanish House would be absorbed in the affairs of Germany for many years. The necessity of Spain and the Empire was ever in the seventeenth century the opportunity of France, and Richelieu realised by a flash of genius that the hour had arrived, which was to make or mar the influence of France in the world. Three things were necessary to the establishment of French supremacy in Europe, national unity, monarchical centralisation, and the extension and security of the frontiers.

To attain these three objects, Richelieu devoted his life, and he was sensible enough to see that complete success in foreign affairs must do much to render success in the other two inevitable. If the crown of France by military and diplomatic conquest could push back the French frontier towards the Rhine, the Scheldt, and the Pyrenees, it need have little to fear from its internal foes. So Richelieu took up again the threads of policy, which had dropped from the lifeless hands of Henry IV., and directed all his energies to the resumption of the attack upon the Empire and upon Spain. But there was this difference between the two men. Henry IV. had dreamed of establishing the peace and good order of the world upon the ruin of the Habsburgs. Richelieu cherished no such illusions. Nakedly and avowedly he sought but the supremacy of France.

Its character.

Richelieu stands out upon the canvas of history as the first of that long line of statesmen who were actuated by purely selfish national interests. Unaffected by moral ideals, such as did so much to disguise the personal ambitions of the wars of the Middle Ages, uninfluenced by the religious motives, which often ennobled, even though they intensified, the ruthlessness of the wars of the sixteenth century, the rulers of the eighteenth and the latter half of the seventeenth centuries made war upon each other purely in the interests of their crowns and of themselves. Personal glory, territorial aggrandisement, commercial advantage were the motives which led to the great wars of Europe from the peace of Westphalia to the Congress of Vienna. Before the fierceness of those appetites the rights of nations, of races, even of humanity itself weighed not a feather in the balance. Germans must lose their speech and their fatherland, that France may push her boundaries to the Rhine. Poland must be wiped out of the map of Europe, that Prussia and Russia may be bigger and greater. Even African negroes must be torn from their homes, and sold as chattels in the market-places of the West, that the pockets of Englishmen and of English

colonists might swell with gold. And if amid the dark scene of selfishness and rapacity there shines at times the nobler light which hallows the wars of liberty against the oppression of Louis XIV. and Napoleon, yet the shadows deepen as they gather round the career of Frederick the Great, and the closing acts of the Napoleonic drama at Vienna, and the historian has sadly to acknowledge that in them are to be found the characteristic scenes of eighteenth century diplomacy and war. It is the triumph of Macchiavellianism on the large scale in international politics. It is the adaptation to the affairs of nations of Hobbes's description of the natural man. *Homo homini lupus.* Everything is permissible to a sovereign which tends to the security and greatness of his power, and nations are to one another as wild beasts. Man in his personal relations is civilised Christian and refined. Nations in their ordinary intercourse with one another are punctilious, courtly and even deferential, but when once selfish aggrandisement is possible, it becomes allowable. The thin veneer of civilisation and of consideration is rudely broken through, and nation stands out against nation in open and barbarous hostility on the principle of the old moss-trooper's rule, that they shall win who have the power and they shall keep who can.

Territorial aggrandisement necessary to France.

From the point of view of the needs of the French monarchy, there was no doubt that Richelieu was right in urging France to a policy of territorial aggrandisement. She was better able to pursue it than were her neighbours, for she was sufficiently free from religious difficulties to be able to throw her sword into the Protestant or the Catholic scale as her interests might suggest. She had more to gain from such a policy than any other nation in Europe, for almost on all sides her land frontiers were a source of weakness. In the south the Spanish provinces of Cerdagne and Roussillon lay on the French side of the central ridge of the Pyrenees, and gave easy access to the Spanish armies into rich and disaffected Languedoc. The Italian frontier was in the keeping of the

duke of Savoy, who, as long as he preserved his independence, was as likely to admit Spanish and imperialist troops into the valley of the Rhone, as French troops into the plain of Lombardy. To the east and to the north-east the frontier was still more insecure. Following roughly the streams of the Saone the Meuse and the Somme, it brought the Empire and Spain dangerously near to Paris, especially as the intervening country was not easily defensible. It is true that on the eastern side a considerable access of strength had been gained by the occupation of the three bishoprics of Metz Toul and Verdun in 1552, which secured to France the important fortress of Metz, but they were not yet formally annexed to the crown of France, but only administered by French officials. A glance at the map will therefore show that the danger from Spain was considerable, and that, until she had succeeded in breaking the chain which bound her almost from the Pyrenees to the Straits of Dover, France could not make full use of her unrivalled geographical position.

Such were the influences which impelled Richelieu to make the rectification of the frontier of France on the side of the Netherlands, the Rhine, and the Pyrenees, the first object of his foreign policy; and to launch France on that career of conquest and aggrandisement at the expense of the House of Habsburg, which has been from his time almost to the present day the central feature of European politics. From the battle of Nördlingen to the battle of Solferino, there has hardly been a great war in Europe in which the armies of France and of the House of Austria have not been arrayed against each other as enemies. Spain was the first foe to be dealt with, for Spain was the most dangerous to neglect, and the easiest to attack. The Spaniards who garrisoned the Milanese had, in 1622, seized upon the valley of the Valtelline, and occupied it by force, in order to secure their communications with the Empire; and had even obliged Chur, the chief town of the League of the Grisons, to receive an imperial garrison. This was

Question of the Valtelline, 1622.

undoubtedly an act of aggression on their part, and gave Richelieu the opportunity of striking a deadly blow at his enemy. The Valtelline is a broad and rich valley which runs in a north-easterly direction into the heart of the Rhaetian Alps from the top of the Lake of Como. About half-way up the valley a mountain pass, practicable for the passage of troops, leads to the east into the valley of the Adige a little north of Trent, from which by the well-frequented Brenner Pass communication with Innsbrück and south Germany was easy and safe. This was the only route which was certain to be available for the passage of troops and stores from the Empire to Milan, as the other mountain passes, which led direct from Tirol and Carinthia into Italy, opened into the territory of the republic of Venice, and Venice was usually not inclined to welcome the arrival of imperial troops. Provided, however, that the passage of the Valtelline was secured, the rest of the way was safe, as it lay through imperial territory. Hence the command of the Valtelline was absolutely essential to the maintenance of the power of the Habsburgs in Italy, but the valley itself was politically subject to the League of the Grisons, which as long ago as 1509 had come under the protection of France. So then, when Spain moved troops into the Valtelline, built a fortress in the valley, and obliged the Grisons to admit an imperial garrison at Chur, Louis XIII. as the protector of the Grisons had the right to interfere.

Richelieu took his measures promptly. In 1624 he helped to bring about a marriage alliance between Charles prince of Wales and Henrietta Maria, the sister of Louis XIII., by which he hoped to gain the assistance of England against Spain on the sea and in the Netherlands, while he struck at the Valtelline. An army of the mountaineers of the Grisons under French leadership drove the imperial troops from Chur, and the papal troops from the Valtelline, where they had replaced the Spaniards. Lesdiguières, at the head of a French force,

Its recovery for the Grisons, 1626.

marched to the assistance of Savoy against Genoa. But just at that time the Huguenots of La Rochelle flew to arms, and Richelieu, afraid of finding himself involved at once in war at home and abroad, came to terms with Spain at the treaty of Monzon, concluded in March 1626, by which the Valtelline was to remain under the control of the Grisons.

For the next three years the whole energies of Richelieu and of France were engaged in the reduction of La Rochelle, and in the war with England, which followed hard upon, and indeed sprung out of, the marriage treaty of 1624. In 1629 he was once more at liberty to turn his attention to Italian affairs. In 1627 the duke of Mantua and Montferrat had died. His nearest heir was a Frenchman, the duke of Nevers. But the Emperor, at the instigation of Spain, not wishing to have a French prince so near the Milanese, determined to sequester the territory on the pretext of a disputed succession. Spanish troops at once overran both Mantua and Montferrat, and driving the duke of Nevers into Casale besieged him there. The Italian princes, however, were not inclined to submit without protest to this exercise by the Emperor of obsolete and doubtful rights. The Pope (Urban VIII.), who was strongly French in sympathy, combined with Venice to ask the assistance of France, and in January 1629 Louis and Richelieu crossed the Mont Genèvre at the head of a large army, captured Susa, relieved Casale, and forced the duke of Savoy to make peace. Again, however, a rebellion of the Huguenots obliged Louis to draw back in the hour of victory (March 1629), and in the summer of that year fresh troops, set free by the imperialist successes in Germany, invaded Italy under Spinola and formed the sieges of Mantua and Casale. In spite of the most strenuous efforts of Louis himself, who crossed the Alps at the head of the French armies in the winter of 1629-30, the combined forces of Spain and the Empire were too strong to be dislodged from Mantua or Montferrat. But the invasion of Germany by Gustavus Adolphus, promoted by France and even by the Pope, made

The Mantuan succession, 1627.

the Emperor anxious for peace, and through the diplomatic skill of the papal agent, Giulio Mazzarini—afterwards to become so celebrated in French history—a truce was arranged, which afterwards ripened into the definitive peace of Cherasco (April 26th, 1631). By this treaty the duke of Nevers was invested with the duchy, and the fortresses were restored on both sides, except Pinerolo, which was still held by the French.

Peace of Cherasco, 1631.

So ended the first great effort made by Richelieu against the House of Habsburg. Like most of his plans it was better conceived than executed, but it must be remembered that in carrying it out, he was sorely hampered by opposition to his authority at home both from the Huguenots and from the nobles. His Italian policy must not be considered by itself. It is part of a great whole. While he was openly attacking the imperial forces in Italy, his diplomacy was undermining the imperialist power in Germany, and if in 1631 he thought it best to rest content with the reduction of Savoy, and the acquisition of a passage through the Alps, it was because at that particular moment he could best effect his purpose by shifting his method from direct to indirect hostility, and the scene from Italy to Germany.

Already he had endeavoured to keep the flame of opposition to Spain alive by granting subsidies to the Dutch, and directing Mansfeld's army in 1624 to the Netherlands. In July 1630, he sent his most trusted agent the famous Capuchin, Father Joseph, to the meeting of the diet of Regensburg, where he laboured with notable skill and success to bring about the dismissal of Wallenstein, and to pave the way for detaching Maximilian of Bavaria and the League from their close alliance with the Emperor and Spain. In the autumn of the year before, another well-trained diplomatist, Charnacé, had travelled as far as Dantzig to offer the mediation of France in the quarrel between Sweden and Poland, and so removed one of the obstacles which made Gustavus Adolphus hesitate to take part in the German War. At that

Intrigues of Richelieu in Germany, 1630.

time Richelieu seems to have thought that he could use Gustavus merely as a fighting tool, and by offering him French money and a French alliance could make him fight the battles of France against the Emperor. But he was quickly undeceived. Gustavus definitely refused to allow his political or military independence to be impaired. He was quite willing that France should interfere openly in the war, if she chose to do so, provided she would limit her operations to the left bank of the Rhine; but he would not tolerate for a moment any interference with his own command. The utmost that Richelieu could obtain from him by the treaty of Bärwalde in 1631, in return for French gold, was the promise to observe friendship or neutrality towards Bavaria and the League, so far as they would observe them towards him. Nor was this promise of much avail, for when, after the battle of Breitenfeld, Gustavus determined to march upon central and southern Germany instead of on Vienna, all hope of detaching Bavaria from the Emperor had to be laid aside.

As long as Gustavus Adolphus lived there was but little room for Richelieu in German politics. Had he survived a few years longer, it is not improbable that the world would have seen an alliance of the Moderates in Germany, under the leadership of Richelieu, supported possibly by both Maximilian and Wallenstein, against the Emperor and the king of Sweden. But the death of Gustavus quickly put the decisive voice in German affairs into the possession of France. Already in 1632 French troops had appeared upon the Rhine, and garrisoned the new fortress of Ehrenbreitstein at the invitation of the elector of Trier. In the same year Richelieu became a party to the League of Heilbronn, and so secured the right to interfere in German affairs. In 1633 a French army entered the old German territory of Lorraine and captured its capital Nancy, owing to the incessant intrigues against the all-powerful cardinal of which the duke had been guilty. The battle of Nördlingen in 1634 put Protestant Germany at the feet of

Open interference in Germany, 1632-1634.

Richelieu. The soil of Germany, harried and plundered, could with difficulty sustain the armies which devastated it. Sweden, poor and exhausted, could make no sacrifices. England was too much occupied with pecuniary difficulties at home to be able to send assistance to Germany. France was the only power both able and willing to provide the sinews of war. She became the protector and director of the League of Heilbronn, took Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar and his army into her pay, claimed from the Swedes the custody of the fortresses held by them in Alsace, and on 19th May 1635 formally declared war against Spain.

Declaration of war against Spain, 1635.

From that moment the character of the Thirty Years' War profoundly alters. It is no longer a war of religion, to set limits to the progress of the Counter-Reformation or to save Catholicism or Protestantism from extinction. It is no longer a war of institutions, to maintain the authority of the Emperor or to preserve the sovereign rights of the princes. It is no longer a war of property, to resist the undoing of the territorial settlement of 1555. It is no longer a war for the re-settlement of Germany upon a new basis by military force. German interests no longer have a place in this terrible war waged for the destruction of Germany on German soil. Primarily, it is a war between the House of Bourbon and the House of Habsburg, to break the power of Spain and increase that of France, through the acquisition by the latter of Alsace and Lorraine. Secondarily, it is a war between the Swedes and the Empire, to gain for the former out of German soil an adequate compensation for the money which they had spent and the blood which they had shed. Two points of interest alone remain in tracing the melancholy story of the weary years, the gradual development of the power of France, and the brilliant achievements of skilful generalship.

The character of the war altered by French interference.

The entrance of France into the war did not at first check the tide of imperialist success. Richelieu overestimated the

resources and the military strength of France. He put into the field no less than four armies, amounting in the aggregate to 120,000 men; but unaccustomed to war, ill disciplined, ill fed, ill paid, and badly commanded, they were no match for the veterans of Spain and the Emperor. It was the first time that the new monarchy in France had made war upon a grand scale, and it had to buy its experience. The campaigns of the years 1635, 1636, and 1637 told a story of almost unrelieved failure. In Italy the French armies just managed to hold their own. In Alsace and the Netherlands they were everywhere outgeneralled and beaten back. In 1636, a Spanish army actually invaded France and threatened Paris. Had it not been for the skilful generalship of Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar in the Rhineland, and the signal success which attended the efforts of the Swedish army, it is not at all improbable that the Emperor would have been able to impose upon all Germany the conditions of the peace of Prague, and by procuring the retirement of the Swedes have narrowed the issues involved to the simple one of a national war between France and Austro-Spain. Already Bavaria and Catholic Germany, as well as Saxony, Brandenburg and nearly all the Lutheran powers, had accepted the treaty. Oxenstjerna and the Swedes had refused after protracted negotiations, only because the Emperor and John George would not hear of making over to them an inch of German soil. On their side they would not be content merely with a money indemnity. Saxony and Brandenburg accordingly joined their forces to those of the Emperor and determined to drive the Swedes back across the sea to their own country. It was a critical moment. Had the Saxons pressed on vigorously after the final rupture of the negotiations in the autumn of 1635, they could hardly have failed to have crushed Baner the Swedish general at Magdeburg with their superior forces, but the opportunity was allowed to slip. Baner withdrew in safety to

Unsuccessful campaigns on the frontiers of France, 1635-1637.

Success of Baner in Germany, Battle of Wittstock, 1636.

the north, and was there strongly reinforced. He now had under his orders an army sufficient to cope with his enemies, and after some marching and countermarching succeeded in throwing himself upon the Saxons and imperialists at Wittstock on the Mecklenberg frontier of Brandenburg on October 4th 1636, before the Brandenburgers could come to their assistance. The victory was one of the most complete won by the Swedes during the whole war. The elector's army was almost annihilated, and Baner became as paramount in northern Germany as the imperialists were upon the Rhine until the following autumn when he was again driven back into Pomerania.

It is noticeable that both in diplomacy and war Richelieu improved his position year by year. Gradually he learned how to win campaigns, as he had learned gradually how to rule France. In the last four years of his life, he gathered the fruits for which he had so patiently laboured in the previous years. In 1638 Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar succeeded in making himself master of the upper Rhineland, and having defeated the imperialists at Rheinfelden occupied Freiburg in Breisgau, and on December 19th captured the important fortress of Breisach. Richelieu when he heard the news hurried to the bedside of his dying friend the Capuchin Joseph, '*Courage, père Joseph*,' he cried, '*Breisach est à nous*,' and with this characteristic viaticum to console and strengthen him in his last agony, the wily diplomatist passed from this world of intrigue, of which for the last ten years his subtle brain had been the master and the mainspring. In July of the next year Bernhard himself died, and his army, together with the conquests which it had made, passed directly under the command of the French. French governors ruled in the Alsatian towns, and from that time the annexation of Alsace to the French monarchy became one of the recognised objects of the policy of the Bourbons. The success of Richelieu did not stop with the

Capture of Breisach by Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, 1638.

Death of Bernhard. His army put under French command.

land. Ever since the fatal day, when the capture of a few French ships by the Huguenot Soubise in the port of Blavet had sent the proud cardinal on his knees to England and the Dutch to borrow ships to use against the revolted Rochellois, Richelieu had devoted special care to the formation of a navy. In 1639 for the first time a French fleet appeared in the Channel, ready to cope with the huge galleons of Spain, and to cut the bond which united her to the Netherlands. France was now to play the same game at the expense of Spain which had been played by Elizabeth of England in the century before. But the time had not yet come when France was to wrest from Spain the command of the sea. The Spaniards succeeded in escaping the French fleet, but only to fall into the hands of their allies the Dutch. Sorely bestead by their quick-sailing antagonists, they took refuge in the Downs under the neutral flag of England, but even there the Dutch admiral pursued them, burned some of their ships, captured others, and forced the remnant to seek the friendly shelter of Dunkirk. From that time the passage of the Channel was closed to a Spanish fleet as long as Spain was at war with the Dutch or the French. In the next year still more serious misfortunes awaited the crown of Spain. Portugal assisted by French subsidies successfully reasserted its independence, and re-established its monarchy under the House of Braganza in December 1640, while earlier in the year the revolt of the high spirited Catalans effectually saved France from all danger of invasion from the south and opened her path to Roussillon, while in Italy the French flag was successfully planted on the walls of Turin. The two following years served to make good the ground thus won, and when Richelieu died in December 1642, he had the satisfaction of feeling that he had got his hand upon the throat of his huge antagonist and was choking her. With French armies strongly encamped on the Rhine and the plain of Piedmont, with French governors established in Alsace and Lorraine, with Roussillon and Cerdagne and

Defeat of the Spanish Fleet in the Downs, 1639.

Revolt of Portugal and Catalonia, 1640.

the passes of Savoy in the possession of France, she had indeed acquired a frontier which not only preserved her from all danger of sudden invasion, but enabled her to strike a swift and deadly blow at her enemies, before they could have time to concentrate their forces against her. Richelieu in his eighteen years of power had given France concentration, unity, and a scientific frontier. Seated between the two seas, bounded by the Pyrenees the Alps and the Vosges, with her hand upon the Rhine and the Scheldt, France was prepared to strike for the supremacy of Europe.

Improved position of France at the death of Richelieu, 1642.

The direction of the policy of France passed on the death of the stern and uncompromising Richelieu into the hands of the supple and intriguing Mazarin, but the change made no difference to the conduct of foreign affairs. Louis XIII. followed his great minister quickly to the grave, and during the minority of his young son, Louis XIV., Anne of Austria, the queen-mother, who was entirely devoted to Mazarin, became regent, and the policy of aggrandisement at the expense of the Austro-Spanish House was vigorously carried on. Within a few months of the accession of the young king, his reign was graced by the most splendid success which had attended the arms of France since the capture of Calais by the duke of Guise. Don Francisco Mello, who had succeeded the cardinal-infant in the government of the Netherlands in December 1641, thought to take advantage of the weakness caused by the change of rulers in France; and sent the count of Fuentes at the head of all the available troops which he could muster, across the frontier. Mazarin, following his habitual policy of trying to attract the princes of the blood to his side, intrusted the command of the French army to the young duc d'Enghien, the eldest son of the prince of Condé, who found the Spaniards on the 19th of May 1643 strongly posted among the marshes which surround the little fortress of Rocroy. Condé, to give him the name by which he is

Richelieu's policy continued by Mazarin.

best known, though he never in the course of a long training in war developed any of the higher qualities of a general, had that magnetic personal power over his men which is all-important on the battle-field. They would follow him anywhere. The *furia francese*, which had been often remarked upon in the Italian wars of the sixteenth century, had been but the mad rush of an undisciplined mob, like the rush of African dervishes. Condé was the first great leader to utilise this power among disciplined troops, and to make the peculiar *élan* of the French charge into one of the most decisive tactics of the battle-field. Ever since the days of the great captain, Gonsalvo da Cordova, the Spanish infantry had been the finest in the world. The solid mass of pikemen, wedged close together in a fortress-like formation, by their stubborn endurance could resist all cavalry attack, and by sheer weight bear down all opposition. But if once the mass became disorganised, it could never re-form. Once break the 'hedgehog' of pikes, and the day was won. Gustavus Adolphus had shown at Breitenfeld how the superiority of artillery and musketry fire might open lanes in these mighty masses, into which the heavy cavalry might throw themselves, and overcome weight by weight in the shock of hand-to-hand conflict. Condé at Rocroy illustrated a similar principle by his mobile and disciplined infantry. Plunging a deadly fire into the dense immovable masses of the Spaniards, he waited for the moment when the falling men began to create confusion in the ranks, then against their front, and into their flanks he poured the lithe and well-trained infantry with irresistible effect. It was the story of the Armada and the English ships retold on land. The huge masses could do nothing against their swarming antagonists. Taken flank, front, and rear, they could not alter their formation, they could not adapt themselves to this new kind of warfare, they would not break and run, there was nothing left but to die. There is something inexpressibly pathetic in the figure of the old count of

Destruction of the military power of Spain at Rocroy, 1643.

Fuentes, seated on his chair in the middle of the fast diminishing square of his choicest troops, for the gout would not permit him even to stand, calmly and patiently awaiting inevitable death, as the defending ranks became thinner and thinner, without the thought of surrender, without the power even of striking a blow in self-defence, the type of his country, and his country's greatness, which was passing away with the shouts of victory which hailed the young conqueror of Rocroy.

The victory of Rocroy made France the first military power of Europe, but it was on the Rhine and not in the Netherlands that she put forth all her energies. During the remaining years of the war, the chief struggle was for the possession of the upper Rhineland. France wished to secure her hold over Alsace by occupying both banks of the great river, and making herself permanently mistress of the fortresses of Breisach and Philipsburg. The Emperor and Maximilian fought stubbornly, the one to save the Breisgau, one of the oldest possessions of the House of Habsburg, from falling into the hand of the enemy, the other to defend the frontiers of Bavaria from insult and plunder. In the cautious Mercy, and the dashing Werth, they obtained the services of generals not unfit to be matched with Condé and Turenne. At Freiburg in Breisgau for three days the impetuous Condé dashed himself in vain against the intrenchments of Mercy in August 1644, neglecting the wiser counsel of Turenne, who showed how easily a flank march through the mountains in the rear must compel the Bavarian general to retire. Just a year afterwards, on August 3d, 1645, Condé won a Pyrrhic victory at Nördlingen by his reckless and irresistible attack, but at too great an expenditure of life to permit him to make use of it, although the Imperialists were sore beset at the time, and Vienna itself threatened by the Swedes under Torstenson.

Conquest of the Upper Rhineland by the French, 1644-1645.

The honour of giving the final determination to the war belongs to Turenne. In 1646 he found himself for the first time at the head of an adequate force, and his own master, and

he at once determined to put a stop to the ruinous system of frittering away advantages by acting on two different centres. By combining his army with that of the Swedes, he saw that he could oppose an overwhelming force to the enemy, and end the war at a blow. Having procured the assent of Wrangel to his plan, who had replaced Torstenson in command of the Swedes, Turenne crossed the Rhine at Wesel, below Köln, and effected his junction with Wrangel on the Main. Slipping cleverly between the archduke Leopold William and the Bavarians, who sought to bar their passage, the united armies marched straight upon the Danube, seized Donauwörth, and spread themselves over the rich plain of Bavaria, plundering and burning up to the gates of Munich, and even penetrating as far as Bregenz in the Vorarlberg. Maximilian in despair deserted the Emperor, and signed a separate truce with the allies in May 1647. He did not keep it long. Stung in conscience, and afraid of after all losing the electoral hat, which he had risked so much to win, he again joined the Emperor in September of the same year. Terrible was the retribution which awaited him. Turenne and Wrangel returned into Bavaria with an army swollen with camp-followers to the number of 127,000. Beating the elector's troops at Zusmarshausen on May 17th, 1648, they fastened like locusts on the land, and soon reduced it to the state of desolation in which the rest of Germany lay. Maximilian summoned Wallenstein's old general Piccolomini to his aid, and prepared to strike one more blow for house and home, but before the armies met, the welcome news came that peace had been signed on the 24th of October at Münster, and the Thirty Years' War was at an end.

Campaign of Turenne and Wrangel, 1646-1647.

For some years the desire for peace had been getting stronger and stronger. In Germany it was felt that the main obstacles to peace had passed away with the chief actors in the struggle. Ferdinand II. had died in the year 1637, and his son Ferdinand III. was not

Negotiations for peace, 1642.

bound in conscience or in policy to the Edict of Restitution. The Elector Palatine, Frederick v., had preceded him in 1632. Christian of Anhalt, Christian of Brunswick, Wallenstein, Gustavus Adolphus, and Bethlen Gabor had long passed away, and the policies which they had represented had taken other forms. There was no German question left seriously difficult of solution. The real obstacles of peace were the ambition of France, and the determination of Oxenstjerna to carve a territory for the Swedes out of the Baltic provinces of Germany. But they could not prevent the beginning of negotiations, though they could do much to hinder their progress, and in 1642 it was agreed that representatives should meet in Westphalia, at the towns of Münster and Osnabrück, to discuss the preliminaries of a treaty. So many were the obstructions thrown in the way that it was not till 1644 that the congress actually met.

Congress of Münster and Osnabrück.

At Münster, which was the meeting-place of the Catholic powers, there appeared under the presidency of the papal nuncio (Chigi) and the ambassador of Venice—the two mediating powers—the representatives of the Empire, of France, of Spain, of the Catholic electors, and the Catholic princes of the Empire. At Osnabrück were gathered the representatives of Sweden, of the Protestant electors, and the Protestant princes and cities of the Empire, together with envoys of France, which was thus represented at both places. It was one thing to get the representatives to meet, it was quite another to get them to set to work. The proposal of an armistice during the negotiations had been definitely refused, and consequently it became to the interest of each of the chief combatants in turn to delay or promote the conclusion of peace as the fortune of war shifted from one side to the other. Questions of precedence and etiquette, always dear to the diplomatic mind, raised themselves in plenty from the side of France or Spain or Sweden, whenever things seemed to be going too quick. Months accordingly passed away and no progress was made.

The German princes, who saw their lands devastated, their villages burned, their towns depopulated, their subjects obliged to turn soldiers or brigands, or, where that was impossible, driven to stave off the pangs of hunger by eating grass and roots, and even human flesh, in order that France might annex Alsace, or Sweden seize Pomerania, soon lost all faith in the tortuous dealings of the diplomatists in Westphalia, and began to shift for themselves. On the 24th of July 1642, the young elector of Brandenburg, Frederick William, made a separate treaty of neutrality with the Swedes, which practically withdrew Brandenburg from the area of the war. On the 31st of August 1645, John George of Saxony followed the example of Brandenburg but on far worse terms. In 1647, as we have seen, even Maximilian of Bavaria was induced under stress of the invasion of Turenne to conclude for a short time a separate truce. These acts showed how passionately Germany longed for peace, but its actual conclusion was due to the pressure exercised upon the Emperor and Maximilian by the successes of Turenne, and upon Oxenstjerna and the Swedes by their young queen. Christina, the daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, had come of age in the year 1644, and had at once begun to show that masterful spirit and commanding ability which were to make her one of the most interesting characters of the century. Partly from a real desire to end the barbarities of the war, partly from the necessities of her crown, she at once applied herself to bring the Westphalian negotiations to a successful issue, sent a special embassy to the court of Paris, and insisted, sorely against the old chancellor's will, upon accepting in behalf of Sweden far less than had hitherto been demanded.

Separate treaties made by Brandenburg, Saxony, and Bavaria.

Interference of Christina of Sweden in favour of peace.

By the peace of Westphalia, signed at last on the 24th of October 1648, exactly thirty years and five months since the regents were thrown out of the window at Prague, the religious difficulty in Germany was met by the extension to the Calvinists of all the

The peace of Westphalia, 1648.

rights enjoyed by the Lutherans under the religious peace. The first day of the year 1624 was taken as the test day by which the question of the ecclesiastical lands was to be settled. All that was in Catholic hands on that day was to remain Catholic, all that was in Protestant hands was to remain Protestant. Roughly speaking the line thus laid down was the line which answered to the facts. It preserved the bishoprics of the south, which were avowedly Catholic, to the Catholics; and the secularised lands of the north, such as Bremen and Verden, Halberstadt and Magdeburg, where the Protestants were in a large majority, to Protestantism; and it secured to Catholicism the victories of the Counter-Reformation in the hereditary dominions of Austria, in Bohemia, in Bavaria, and in the upper Palatinate. Finally, the treaty provided for the equal division of the two interests in the imperial court of justice. There was little difficulty in thus finding a satisfactory solution of the questions connected with religion, which had been at the beginning of the war so grave and alarming. Both sides had by the process of time become aware that they could not destroy the other, and had learned, if they did not admit, the necessity of toleration. The serious problems for solution were those connected with compensation. Eventually, however, the following arrangements were agreed to.

1. Solution of the religious questions.

2. Territorial compensation.

1. Maximilian of Bavaria retained the electorate, which was made hereditary in his family, and was permitted to add the upper Palatinate to his duchy of Bavaria.

2. A new electorate was created for Charles Lewis, the eldest son of Frederick, Elector Palatine, and the lower Palatinate was restored to him.

3. Sweden received western Pomerania, including the mouth of the Oder, and the bishoprics of Bremen and Verden, which gave her a commanding strategical and commercial position on the German rivers, and the right of being represented in the German Diet.

MAP SHOWING THE MARCH
AND THE TERRITORIAL CHANGES EFFE

March of Gustavus Adolphus ⟶ *Brandenburg-Prussia*

France tinted ▭ *United Provinces tin*

Do. Gains in 1648 ▬ *Switzerland tinted*

Brandenburg-Prussia tinted ▭ *Swedish Gains in 16*

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USTAVUS ADOLPHUS,
BY THE PEACE OF WESTPHALIA.

1624-1648 — *Saxon Gains in 1648*

Bavaria tinted

Do. Gains in 1648

Austrian Dominions tinted

4. Brandenburg was compensated for her loss of western Pomerania by the addition of the bishoprics of Halberstadt, Camin, Minden, and the greater part of Magdeburg, to her dominions; and by the confirmation of her inheritance in eastern Pomerania. In addition to this, she now obtained control over the duchies of Cleves Mark and Ravensberg, which had been apportioned to her by the treaty of Xanten in 1614, but during the war had been occupied by the rival armies of the Spaniards and the Dutch.

5. France obtained possession of Austrian Alsace, including Breisach, and the right to garrison Philipsburg; but the free city of Strasburg was expressly reserved to the Empire. The three bishoprics of Metz Toul and Verdun were formally annexed to the crown of France, while in Italy she received the fortress of Pinerolo.

6. Saxony retained Lusatia, and acquired part of the diocese of Magdeburg, and the independence of the Dutch and the Swiss was finally acknowledged.

The peace of Westphalia, like the war to which it put an end, marks the close of one epoch and the beginning of another. It closes the long chapter of the religious troubles in Germany, which grew out of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and it did so in the most satisfactory manner possible, not by laying down any great principle of religious toleration or religious domination, but simply by recognising accomplished facts. Calvinism had worked its way to an equal position with Lutheranism among the religious forces of Germany, and that fact was accordingly recognised. The supremacy of each prince in his own dominions over the religious as well as the political conduct of his people had been recognised by the peace of Augsburg in 1555, and been uniformly acted upon by Catholic and Protestant alike ever since. It was now definitely, if tacitly admitted, and possible evils guarded against by drawing the territorial line between Catholicism and Protestantism as nearly as possible to

The Peace, a solution of the religious difficulty.

coincide with the actual difference of belief. It was still possible for a Protestant prince in the north to oppress his Catholic subjects, it was still possible for a Catholic prince of the south to banish all Protestants from his dominions, but the question henceforth was but a local one, a matter solely between the prince and his subjects, which imposed upon Protestants and Catholics elsewhere in Germany no greater duty and gave them no more right to interfere, than did the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV. in France. Such a solution may not have been from the point of view of morals the best conceivable. It was under the circumstances of the time the best possible. To modern ideas it may seem that the negotiators of Westphalia lost a great opportunity of forcing into the unwilling hands of Germany the priceless boon of religious toleration. Had they attempted to do so, they would only have kept alive the spirit of religious animosity, and given to political ambition the right again to shelter itself under the claims of religion and renew the flame of war. By making the question wholly one between prince and people, they ensured that all the conservative forces of human nature, the forces that make against novelty, disturbance, and revolution, the forces which impel men and governments so powerfully to take the line of the least resistance, should be enlisted on the side of religious peace. If the door was still left open to an archbishop of Salzburg to banish all Protestants from his dominions, the paucity of such instances of oppression after the peace of Westphalia, is alone sufficient proof of the truce in religious affairs which it practically brought about; while the danger of a hundred such acts of tyranny cannot weigh as a feather in the balance against the unspeakable horror of a renewal of the war.

The peace of Westphalia is also the beginning of a new era. It marks the formation of the modern European states system. In Germany itself the central fact registered by the peace is the final disintegration of the Empire. The machinery it is true was still left intact.

The Peace the beginning of modern Europe.

There was an Emperor and a diet, electors and an imperial court of justice, but all reality had passed away from them as a governing power in Germany. The German people were governed by the German princes, who had all the rights of sovereignty. They could coin money, make war, organise armies, and send representatives to other courts. The central authority was reduced to a minimum, and if the Emperor was still a power in Germany, it was not because he was Emperor, but because he was archduke of Austria and many other German duchies, king of Bohemia, and king of Hungary. The effect is at once visible in the policy of the House of Austria. The Emperor still maintained his interests in Germany and on the Rhine, still he stood forward as the champion of Germany to prevent France from dominating over Europe, still from time to time he waged war to check the growing power of Prussia, to develop schemes of commercial enterprise in the Netherlands, but nevertheless, irresistibly, in spite of tradition, and of association, his real attention became fixed more and more irrevocably on the east and on the south. His policy in fact in its heart of hearts ceased to be imperial or even German and became purely Austrian. He sought compensation on the Danube for his losses on the Rhine. He sacrificed much for a hold over Italy, which should give to his impoverished and land-locked country the riches of the plain of Lombardy and ports on the Adriatic. Insensibly and steadily he pushed his territorial frontier more and more to the east and south, while Brandenburg actuated by similar forces was pushing hers to the west and to the north.

1. The Empire becomes Austrian.

Set free from even the shadow of imperial centralisation, Germany was enabled to follow unimpeded her own laws of development. In central Germany the spirit of disintegration, and the fearful desolation caused by the war conquered all desire for unity. Almost to the present day it has remained a heap of undistinguished and undistinguishable atoms. But in north Germany,

2. Sovereignty of the German princes.

the natural tendency of small states to coalesce with larger states began to show itself, and Brandenburg at once started on that career of conquest and aggrandisement which has brought her in our own day to the headship of Europe, while Bavaria, in alliance with France, bid with some success against the House of Austria for the leadership of south Germany, which since 1866 she has practically attained. Thus, with regard to the internal politics of Germany, the peace of Westphalia set in motion the forces, which, by ousting the Emperor from predominance in Germany, throwing the energies of the House of Austria towards Italy and the lower Danube, and enabling the House of Hohenzollern to strike for the leadership of north Germany and the command of the Rhine, have during the last two hundred years permanently affected the balance of power in Europe and the condition of the German people.

3. Growth of Brandenburg and Bavaria.

Outside the boundaries of Germany, the treaties of Westphalia mark no less a change in the relations of the great powers of Europe. It is the last time that the Pope appears as the mediator of the peace of nations. His refusal to sanction the treaties was simply set on one side by Catholic and Protestant powers alike, and from that time his influence in the international politics of Europe ceased. France and Sweden are the two nations who have most right to claim the peace of Westphalia as marking an epoch in their national history. With Sweden it is the high-water mark of her European influence. The treaties recognised her as one of the great powers of Europe, and secured to her the supremacy of the Baltic, and the right to claim the allegiance of north Germany, if she could win it. But the task proved beyond her capacity, and she slowly shrank before the advancing power of Brandenburg and of Russia, until before a hundred years had passed it had become abundantly clear that with regard to Sweden the peace did not mark the permanent inclusion of a new power among the great nations of Europe.

4. Diminished influence of the Papacy.

5. Transitory character of Swedish greatness.

With France the case was quite different. The peace is but one step on the long road of territorial aggrandisement on which she had definitely entered at the bidding of Richelieu and Mazarin. She became by the war the first military power in Europe. By the peace she was planted securely upon the Rhine and acquired not merely a scientific frontier for offence and defence in the virgin fortress of Metz, the mountains of the Vosges, and the strongholds of Breisach and Philipsburg, but an incentive to future exertion, and a spur to criminal ambition, in the desire to make her hold upon the Rhine but the beginning of a vaster scheme of conquest. The *damnosa hereditas* of the Rhine frontier for France, sanctioned in part by the peace of Westphalia, has been the chief disturbing element in European politics for nearly two centuries and a half, and the malignancy of its poison shows even now no signs of abatement. The great questions, which have agitated Europe during the years which have elapsed since the Thirty Years' War, have mainly centred round the rivalry of Russia and of Austria for the command of the Danube and the inheritance of the Turk, and the rivalry of France and Germany for the possession of the Rhine. The great settlements of European affairs, which have taken place since that time at Utrecht, at Vienna, at Paris, and at Berlin, have been but the hatching of the fully developed chicks from the eggs laid in Westphalia in 1648.

6. Permanent advance of France.

Spain was not included in the peace of Westphalia. The war between her and France still continued for twelve years more, though at the time the peace was signed at Münster it seemed as if the unwieldy monarchy was on the brink of dissolution. Portugal had asserted its independence, Catalonia assisted by a French army was in full revolt. Roussillon and Cerdagne were in French hands. Flanders and the port of Dunkirk had fallen under the spell of the conqueror of Rocroy. In 1646 a naval battle off the coast of Tuscany made the French for the first time masters of the Mediterranean. Finally in 1648

Desperate condition of Spain, 1648.

Naples revolted at the bidding of a fisherman named Masaniello, and, had Mazarin shown a little more vigour and decision, might have been entirely lost to the Spanish monarchy. Freed from the necessity of exertion on the side of the Rhine, Mazarin had but to press his victories home in the Netherlands and Catalonia to force Spain to a dishonourable peace. But suddenly all these advantages were lost, and the tables completely turned, by the grotesque outbreak of personal ambition, and constitutional factiousness, known as the Fronde. For six years the nobles and the citizens of Paris played at revolution, in order to wrest power out of the hands of Mazarin and transfer it to their own. Maddened by the spirit of faction, they did not hesitate to call in the enemy and join themselves to Spain, if thereby they could wreak their vengeance on the hated minister. Even Turenne and Condé were found at different times leading armies against France. But in the end the cleverness of the minister, the stubbornness of the queen-mother, and the influence of the royal authority prevailed; and in 1653 Mazarin returned from his second exile to take up again the reins of government which he held until his death.

Spain saved by the outbreak of the Fronde, 1648.

How different were the circumstances under which he again resumed the war against Spain! The resources of France had been squandered, the armies of France had become demoralised, the authority of the government weakened, while Spain had profited by the difficulties of her enemy to recover the Netherlands and Catalonia, and, through the treason of Condé, was enabled to place one of the best generals of the day at the head of her armies. In 1653 he invaded France and threatened Paris, but was foiled by the superior strategy of Turenne, and obliged to retreat. In the three following years France slowly won back the frontier towns of the Netherlands. It was clear that neither side was able to inflict upon the other such a defeat as would end the war. So in 1656 Mazarin, cardinal and absolutist though he was, sought for the alliance

Weakness of France after the Fronde, 1653.

of Cromwell, the Protestant hero of the English revolution. Cromwell looked upon Spain with the eyes of Elizabeth, and saw in her but the chief supporter of Popery in Europe, and the chief obstacle to English trade. An agreement was soon arrived at by which 6000 of Cromwell's soldiers, probably the best in Europe, were put at the disposal of Mazarin. In 1657 a change was quickly perceived in the war. Turenne, with the assistance of his new allies, defeated the Spaniards at the battle of the Dunes, captured Mardyke and Dunkirk, which was handed over to England, and overran the country almost up to Brussels in June 1658. This blow determined the Spanish government to treat for peace. Conferences were held between the ambassadors of the two countries on the Bidassoa during 1659, and on November 7th the peace of the Pyrenees was signed. By it France acquired Artois, Roussillon, and Cerdagne, and the towns of Thionville, Landreçies, and Avesnes. She agreed to restore the duke of Lorraine to his duchy, on condition that the fortifications of Nancy were destroyed, and the armies of France allowed free passage through the country. Condé was pardoned and restored to his property and dignities. Finally the alliance was cemented by the marriage of Louis XIV. to Maria Theresa, the daughter of Philip IV., who on her marriage renounced on the part of herself and her children all claim to the throne of Spain, on receipt of a dowry of 500,000 crowns. This dowry was never paid, and in consequence it became a question whether the renunciation was of any effect at all.

Alliance between Mazarin and Cromwell, 1657.

The Peace of the Pyrenees, 1659.

The peace of the Pyrenees is the complement of that of Westphalia. It marks the completion of the scientific frontier of France to the south. The primary work of Richelieu had been accomplished. On the south, on the south-east, and on the east, France was now possessed of a frontier not merely defensible, but equally available for offence or defence. Through the passes of the

Commanding position of France, 1660.

Pyrenees, the Alps, and the Vosges, her armies could pour at a moment's notice into the valleys of the Ebro, the Po, and the Rhine. Only to the north was the frontier still unmarked by natural boundaries. The annexation of Artois removed the danger some few miles farther away from Paris, but that was all. So grew up on the side of the Netherlands a desire for the Scheldt and the Demer as the natural boundaries of France to the north, analogous to the passion so fondly cherished by all French statesmen with regard to the Rhine to the east. The politics of the future were coloured and affected by the rivalry of the French and the Dutch on the Scheldt, as by the rivalry of the French and the Germans on the Rhine. Among the fondest dreams of French statesmen, second only to, the acquisition of the Rhine, has been the annexation of the Netherlands as a legitimate object of French ambition, and it may be questioned whether any policy has cost France more blood and treasure than that which has turned some of the fairest and richest districts of the world into the cockpit of Europe. To Spain the peace of the Pyrenees is a great epoch. The peace of Vervins marked her failure, the peace of the Pyrenees marked her fall. She had once bid for supremacy over Europe and had failed. She had then entered the lists as the equal and rival of France and had been beaten. France issued from the contest victorious both by land and sea, and could condescend to take her former rival into protection and partnership. After the peace of the Pyrenees, France and Spain from being deadly rivals tended to become more and more the closest of friends, until the time came when, owing to the provisions of the peace, France stretched out its hands to absorb its mighty neighbour, and the family compacts of the Bourbons dominated the politics of the world.

CHAPTER VII

FRANCE UNDER RICHELIEU AND MAZARIN

Character of Richelieu—The principles of his government—Defects of his policy—Character of Louis XIII.—Position and organisation of the Huguenots—The rising of 1625—Edicts against the nobles—Conspiracy of Vendôme—War with England—Siege of La Rochelle—Destruction of the political power of the Huguenots—Administrative reforms—The Day of Dupes—Rising of Montmorency—Conspiracy of Cinq Mars—Centralising policy of Richelieu—The regency of 1643—Character of Mazarin—Outbreak of the Fronde—Constitutional claims of the Parlement—Unpopularity of the prime ministership—Weakness of the Parlement—The lead taken by the nobles—Factiousness of the movement—Flight of Mazarin—The Fronde in the provinces—End of the Fronde—Last years of Mazarin.

THE well-known portrait of Richelieu in the gallery of the Louvre shows us the features of a man who under the outside of an aristocratic calm conceals a highly nervous and anxious temperament. There is not a trace of brutality, not a suggestion of coarseness, in the finely moulded features. At the first glance there seems almost a want of power in the delicate oval of the pale and attenuated face. Here is no Henry VIII. to trample on the laws alike of God and man in order to satisfy the demands of an imperious will, and rivet the chains of slavery on a panic-stricken people. Here is no Cromwell to march ruthlessly to his goal, over the constitution of his country, through the blood of his king, in the fervid enthusiasm of a divine mission. Here surely is no Napoleon to treat in callous selfishness human life and national faith as nothing in comparison to military glory and personal ambition. Yet the charges against Richelieu writ

Character of Richelieu.

large on the page of history are precisely those which his portrait repudiates. Indiscriminate severity, ruthless barbarity, inordinate ambition, personal tyranny, such are the accusations levelled against him as a statesman and as a man. He is depicted as one who governed, and who preferred to govern, by terrorism and espionage, who struck down remorselessly and indiscriminately all who dared to oppose him, who established the ascendency of a gaoler over the weaker nature of the miserable king, who made France drink deep of the intoxicating potion of military glory in order that she might not feel the ever tightening chains of civil slavery. Even those who applaud his patriotism, and recognise him as the author of the greatness of France admit the charges of ruthlessness and barbarity made against his government by apologising for them.

Principles of his government.

The home policy of Richelieu, less perhaps than that of any other statesman, admits of palliatives and excuses. It is etched sharply on the plate of history in white and black. There are no neutral tints. He took for his motto that of the Romans of old, *Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*, and if ever such a principle is admissible in human affairs it was admissible in France in the days of Richelieu. But it is clear the principle must be pronounced justifiable, not merely excusable, before the muse of history can smooth over the harsh black lines of the portrait which she has been accustomed to draw. A statesman may in the course of difficult affairs be betrayed into the commission of a great crime, as was Theodoric in his participation in the murder of Odoacer, and his character may yet stand out from among men noble and true, though his name must go down to posterity linked with a thousand virtues and one crime. But the conduct of a ruler, who deliberately from first to last acts upon an immoral principle of government, and steadily carries it out through his whole career, admits of no palliation. He may blunder perhaps into a noble and patriotic action as did Napoleon in the

restoration of Christianity in France, but that cannot affect the general severity of the condemnation. So it is with Richelieu. We cannot pick and choose among his actions, admit that in one execution he was right, in another he was wrong. We cannot plead that a policy of terrorism is criminal, but in his particular case there was much to diminish the guilt. He will have none of such compromises and such excuses. Deliberately, unhesitatingly, in his lifetime he chose a policy stern, terrific, pitiless, and he carried it out relentlessly but not revengefully. Men accuse him of never sparing even the dupe and the fool, they do not accuse him of destroying the innocent. Not like Henry VIII. did he ever put men to death because they might at some future time prove seditious. Not like Charles II. did he permit innocent lives to be sworn away wholesale rather than face the danger of a popular tumult. No, all who suffered under him were legally guilty, but nearly all who were legally guilty suffered. It was a terrible policy —the extermination of the evil-doer, the establishment of the structure of firm government in the blood of its enemies,— but it is the policy which Richelieu adopted and defended in his lifetime, and for which for two centuries and a half he has stood at the bar of public opinion, pleading, as every line in his portrait shows, not palliation, not excuse, but the calm conviction of a man who knows that he is in the right.

Their justification.

There are times in the history of nations as in the history of individual man, when the only possibility of safety and health lies in the rigorous application of the knife. Such a state of disease the body politic had reached in France, as it seemed to Richelieu, in the seventeenth century. The poison of separation and anarchy had been imbedded too deep in the system by the civil wars of the last century, for the ordinary remedies of steady and firm government to have any effect. As long as the Huguenots were forming themselves into a political organisation in rivalry to the government of France, and as long as the nobles were bent upon making all government impossible in order that they might personally

profit from the evils of anarchy, there was a cancer eating into the heart of France which made national death inevitable. The only hope of saving life lay in the unsparing excision of the malignant tissue. If only one fibre was left it would soon become a fresh root of the fell disease. For it must be remembered that Richelieu had to deal with a nation which had no power of defending itself against the evils which threatened to destroy it. There was too little cohesion among the various provinces seignories and towns, of which France was made up, to admit of any united action. Excepting so far as the royal authority made itself felt, the administration of the country districts was still feudal, in the hands of the seigneurs and their officers, and that of the towns was aristocratic, in the hands of the richer citizens and their officers. The whole of the local administration was thus absorbed by the aristocracy and the official classes. Intensely jealous both of the king above them and of the people below them, they were still too divided in rank and too narrow in sympathies to take the direction of affairs into their own hands. When they met together as in the States-General of 1614 they disclosed the most deep-seated rivalries. The days of the political triumphs of their natural leaders, the great nobles, had been the darkest and most miserable which France had ever experienced. Incapable of good they were potent only for evil. Their privileges, their authority, their prestige barred the way of the simplest administrative reforms. Equal administration of justice, equal taxation, free circulation of commodities within the country were impossible as long as the seigneurs held their special fiscal and judicial powers in their own districts. From classes whose one idea of government was the maintenance of personal and class privilege nothing could be hoped. They formed an impenetrable barrier of obscurantism in the way of good government. Interested in the maintenance, not in the suppression, of abuse, they kept the people down with one hand in misery and degradation, while with the other they sought to terrify the king into tutelage. Duller eyes than

those of Richelieu might easily have seen that with such an enemy there was no middle course possible. Feudalism as a political power must be stamped out or it would kill France.

If Richelieu had lived three centuries earlier or a century later he might have endeavoured, as Edward I. or Burke would have endeavoured, to plant the roots of his new government deep in the affections of the people by enshrining it in permanent institutions. A wise and thoughtful statesmanship, which, in destroying the power of feudalism utterly, could have replaced it by an alliance of the powers of the Crown and of the people, would have been indeed an unique blessing not only for France but for Europe. Institutions which could have brought into mutual contact the interests of the peasant, the bourgeois, and the roturier, and could have combined them with the interests of the Crown, would soon have given a quick-witted people like the French what they most wanted—political education. An aristocracy as capable and as generous as the French noblesse would not long have sulked like Achilles in his tent, but would soon have been found in its proper place as the leader of the people, claiming the privilege of the post of danger by the right of truest worth. But a policy such as this was possible only for one who combined sympathy for the people with rare political foresight. Richelieu possessed neither, and was born in an age unfavourable to both. A clear sharp eye to the present and immediate future, indomitable courage, quick decision, inflexible will, such were the gifts he brought to the service of France. For her service he used them without a thought for any one else. He gave her national unity. He secured for her religious peace. He centralised all the forces of the nation under the Crown. He made that Crown the chief among the powers of Europe. He planted the seeds of a colonial empire, and nourished the budding germs of artistic and literary excellence. But he effected no financial or judicial reform. He stirred not a finger to relieve the social burdens of the people. He even increased their misery and

Limitations of his policy.

would not listen to their complaints. Everything for the people and nothing by the people has been taken as the motto of beneficent despotism. Richelieu cannot lay claim even to that. For France collectively he had an intense and vivid love. For her greatness he willingly spent himself. For the French people considered as social units, as individuals, or as classes, he cared not an atom. He struck to the earth the political power of the nobles, because as long as it existed France could neither be great nor united. He never attempted to interfere with one of their social privileges, though it was by those that they made the lives of the bulk of the French peasants hideous and miserable. As a benefactor of the French people he is as infinitely below Sully and Colbert as he is above them in statesmanship. A wretched financier, an incapable administrator, prompt to demand the obedience of the people whom he governed, and careless of their happiness, without one spark of sympathy, without one touch of weakness, Richelieu stands before us as the embodiment of intellect and of will. His business was with *la haute politique*. That he understood. To that he devoted all his energies. In that he shone supreme. With unerring quickness of intellectual judgment he singled out at once the true obstacles to the greatness of France. He found them in the national disintegration brought about by the civil wars, and largely fostered by the Huguenots, and in the anarchical tendencies of the higher nobility. With true political insight he saw that with a professional army at his back and the sentiments of loyalty and national unity to support him, there was nothing which could stop the ultimate victory of the Crown, save the weakness of the Crown itself. For some years the struggle was intense, but his indomitable will in the end gained the day. When he had once won the confidence of the cautious and suspicious king the contest was practically over, and he was free to turn his attention almost wholly to foreign affairs. By a policy eminently skilful, if morally unjustifiable, he contrived to hide the scars of civil dissension by the lustre

of military glory, and to provide a more congenial and patriotic sphere for the energies of a nobility whom he had deprived of political influence, by summoning them to win for France the victories which were to make her king the leader of Europe.

The greatness of the reign of Louis XIII. begins with the ministry of Richelieu, and the death of the king followed so close upon the death of the minister that the fame of the master has become wholly overshadowed by the greatness of the servant. When Richelieu was on the stage there was indeed but little room for any one else. Yet it does not appear on closer inspection, that Louis was either the personal or political nonentity which he has often been described. His character was indeed singularly unlike that of his father or his son, and in so many respects different from the ordinary French type, that perhaps French historians have done him but scant justice. His temperament was cold, heavy, and passionless, his mind slow and reserved, but tenacious, and at times obstinate. A man of few friends and no intimates, hardly if at all susceptible to the influence of women, without strong desires or ambitions, without many interests, yet one who kept a shrewd and watchful eye upon the world. Very cautious and patient in making up his mind, suspicious of all but a very few, when his decision was taken he acted firmly, boldly, straightforwardly, and never went back. Strangely enough his real interests were in the more strenuous affairs of out-door life. Like James I. he was passionately fond of hunting, unlike him he was almost more fond of war. No mean soldier himself, he was a very good judge of military capacity in others, and was never so well and never so happy as when on campaign. Many of the officers who did so much to establish the credit of the French armies at the beginning of the next reign, like Fabert, owed their promotion to the skilled eye and firm friendship of Louis XIII. His relations with his mother Marie de Medicis and his great minister show him to have been a man of more than ordinary tact. It was

Character of Louis XIII.

by no means easy to keep the peace between the two, when Marie believed herself to have been basely deserted, and Richelieu had not a friend at court save the king himself. It was still less easy to maintain the minister against the incessant and malevolent attacks of his enemies, and yet preserve the independence of action and reserve of judgment necessary to prevent the king from degenerating into the partisan. But in this he succeeded remarkably well. He trusted Richelieu far more sincerely than Richelieu trusted him, and it is interesting to notice in their correspondence at critical moments, that it is the king who becomes more calm, more collected, more dignified, as the intensity of the crisis increases, while Richelieu is torn by doubts and hesitations and seems overwhelmed by anxieties and fear. But in reality Richelieu never had any good reason to doubt the friendship or support of the king. Louis had the gift, rare in men in his position, of knowing when to act and when to remain quiet. He never suffered his minister to forget that he was a minister and not a king. Richelieu never assumed so large a part of the functions of royalty as did Buckingham in England. He was a Wolsey, not a *maire du palais*. But on the other hand Louis had the sense to see that if a king is fortunate enough to have a Richelieu for his minister he must give him a free hand. He held the scales of justice even between his minister and his court, he suffered no mean motives of jealousy to detract from the fulness of his confidence, and he was content to be classed by posterity among the makers of the French monarchy, because he had had the fortune to be the maker and master of the greatest of French ministers.

Position of the Huguenots, 1622.

The peace of Montpellier, concluded between Louis and the revolted Huguenots in October 1622, was one of those treaties which are not so much a conclusion of a struggle as a preliminary to its recommencement. It left the questions at issue not merely unsolved but intensified. Huguenotism, always quite as much a political as a religious movement, had derived its aspirations and

drawn much of its strength from the desire of independence arising from the jealousy of the king of Paris, which was characteristic of the south of France, and from the jealousy of the French crown, which was characteristic of the French nobility. It was among the towns of the south of France and among the smaller nobility—the country seigneurs—that it spread with the greatest rapidity. Its strongly self-centred and individualistic creed fell in naturally with their passionate love for their privileges and their intense dread of the central government. Ever since the Huguenots became a power in the land, the tendency of their policy had been towards independence, all the more significant because it came about without any defined cry for separation. Aided by the weakness of the crown Huguenot towns, such as La Rochelle Montauban and Nismes, during the civil troubles became self-governing communities independent of the French government, and had been practically recognised as such by various treaties during the wars, and by the Edict of Nantes. Huguenot organisations under the name of 'circles' parcelled France out into districts under regular officers for the purposes of defence and offence from end to end. In many parts of the country this organisation consisted merely upon paper, but in the north where the influence of the duke of Bouillon was great, and over large districts of the south it was a dangerous and menacing reality. In the strong words attributed to Richelieu, the Huguenots shared the government of France with the king. In the revolt of 1621, although the leaders probably never intended to do more than frighten the Crown and secure their own political position, many of the rank and file were openly fighting for independence. To the Crown therefore it had become essential to crush the power of the Huguenots if it wished to be supreme over France. To the Huguenots it was no less essential to conquer the Crown if they wished to secure their independence.

Their organisation.

In such a state of affairs the treaty of Montpellier was obviously but a breathing space in the combat. Both sides

saw that at that moment neither of them could win a decisive victory, and both were content to wait for a more favourable opportunity. That opportunity seemed to have come to the hot-headed Soubise, the brother of Rohan and the head of the circle of La Rochelle in 1625. The new minister was hardly yet settled in his saddle. It was no secret that he was surrounded by enemies of all kinds, from the king's brother Gaston of Orléans down to the pages of the royal household. He had just engaged the forces of France in the question of the Valtelline, and had incurred the enmity of the more strenuous of the Catholic party by making war upon the soldiers of the Pope. Surely a rising of the Huguenot organisations at such a moment could not fail to be successful at least in overturning the rash and unpopular minister. Since Richelieu had been in power he had been diligently forming a nucleus of a royal navy, and at the beginning of 1625 the six vessels of war, which were the outcome of his efforts, were gathered in the little port of Blavet in Brittany. Soubise by an act of happy daring seized the whole of them on the 17th of January 1625, and, establishing himself on the islands of Rhé and Oléron, prepared, now that he was undisputed master of the sea, to defy any attack which the royal forces might direct against the walls of La Rochelle. But Richelieu was not so easy out-generalled. He at once withdrew from the affairs of Italy, procured ships from Holland and England, after long and tortuous negotiations in which he completely outwitted Buckingham, and manning them with French sailors inflicted a crushing defeat upon Soubise in September 1626, and forced him to take refuge in England. The crisis had been, however, sufficiently acute to show Richelieu that it was not safe to undertake responsibilities abroad as long as his enemies at home were so watchful and unsubdued. He must establish his authority on a firm basis in France, before he could run the risk again of having to deal with foreign war and internal revolts together. On the 5th of February he put an end to the Huguenot rising by renewing the terms of the treaty

Rising of the Huguenots, 1625.

of Montpellier. In March the treaty of Monzon relieved him for the moment of all danger from the side of Spain, and he felt that the time had then arrived when he might safely proceed to strike the first blow at the power of the nobles.

In the summer of 1626 two edicts were issued in pursuit of this policy. By the first all duelling was declared punishable by death. By the second the destruction of all fortified places not situated on the frontier was ordered. These two laws struck at two of the most cherished privileges of the nobles and the greatest dangers of the state. The right of an independent tribunal of arms, by which all personal questions arising in their own order should be adjudicated, was one incompatible with civilised and authoritative government. The fortified town and the fortified castle formed the natural home of both sedition and oppression, and Richelieu, in determining to sweep them away in France, was merely taking a course which all restorers of order in all countries had felt themselves obliged to take. Like Henry II. of England he found that fortresses in the hands of a territorial nobility were inconsistent with the power of the Crown. But the nobles were not going to submit to legislation of this sort without attempting a counter stroke. Gaston of Orléans, the king's brother, with the duc de Vendôme the son of Henry IV. and Gabrielle d'Estrées, the comte de Soissons another prince of the House of Bourbon, the duchesse de Chevreuse a friend of the queen and a born *intrigante* and tireless enemy of the cardinal, became the leaders of a plot to depose the king, to assassinate Richelieu, and put Gaston on the throne. It was soon discovered. Gaston to save his own life basely surrendered his friends and associates to the ruthless mercy of Richelieu. The comte de Chalais suffered for him on the scaffold, another of his associates, Ornano, in prison. The duc de Vendôme, the duc de la Valette son of the old duc d'Epernon, Madame de Chevreuse, the comte de Soissons were all banished, and Richelieu rid

Edicts against duelling and private castles, 1626.

Suppression of the conspiracy of Vendôme and Chalais, 1626.

himself at one blow of the most dangerous of his enemies. The nobles were astonished at his audacity. They could not believe that any one would dare so to treat the noblest of their order, but in the following year they received a lesson which startled them still more. The comte de Montmorency-Bouteville, one of the famous family of Montmorency and a noted duellist, fought a duel in open day in the midst of Paris in disregard of the royal edict. Richelieu had him immediately arrested and put to death on the scaffold on the 21st of June 1627. The execution of one of the noblest of French subjects, for the exercise of one of the commonest and most cherished privileges of the French nobility, showed them more clearly than anything else had yet done, that the minister at the head of the government was determined to be their master.

Execution of Montmorency-Bouteville, 1627.

Hardly had Richelieu emerged in triumph from his first contest with the nobles, than he found himself involved in an unnecessary war with England and the Huguenots. The treaty between France and England on the occasion of the marriage between Henrietta Maria and Charles I. contained provisions which were absolutely certain to lead to mutual recriminations sooner or later. Charles had promised publicly to permit his wife to keep her French household, and have complete control over the education of the children till they were thirteen years of age. Privately he had bound himself to tolerate Roman Catholicism in England. But he very soon found that, in the excited and unreasonable temper of the English people, it was impossible for him even to pardon Roman priests condemned under the penal laws. Neither in the interests of his domestic life could he permit a band of mischief-making women to alienate from him the affections of his child-wife. In both these matters he found himself compelled to break his word. Louis on his side set at naught his own verbal promise to permit Mansfeld and the English contingent to march across France to attack the Palatinate, and so in the eyes of the English court became largely

War with England, 1627.

responsible for the terrible misfortunes of the year 1626 in Germany. When Richelieu in further pursuance of the treaty had demanded from Charles a loan of ships to use against Soubise and the revolted Huguenots, Buckingham had set his wits against those of Richelieu to avoid carrying out his obligation in fact, while he outwardly professed to be eager to do so, and even condescended to the trick of organising a sham mutiny on board the fleet. But in the end he was outwitted, and the spectacle of English ships in the French fleet, which defeated Soubise and the Huguenots, so exasperated the Protestant party in the English Parliament, that Buckingham from motives of self-defence as well as from those of wounded pride declared war against France in order to shift the odium from himself to Richelieu, and to pose before the world as the champion of the Protestant cause. In July 1627 Buckingham, at the head of a large but ill-appointed fleet, appeared before La Rochelle, and occupying the island of Rhé besieged the fort of S. Martin. The Rochellois much against their will felt compelled to make common cause with the English, and the Huguenots in the south of France seized the opportunity once more to rise into revolt under Rohan. Richelieu found himself again threatened by a formidable combination of foreign and domestic enemies, and determined this time to have recourse to no half measures. In November Buckingham was obliged to withdraw from before the unconquered S. Martin and sail back to England for reinforcements. Richelieu himself formed the siege of La Rochelle. Recognising at once the impossibility of capturing a city open to the sea and surrounded by marshes by attack on the land side only, he began the gigantic work of building a mole right across the mouth of the harbour. Thus he hoped to cut off the city wholly from the possibility of relief from the sea, while the rigid lines of circumvallation drawn round the town prevented any attempt at introducing provisions from the land side. For five months the weary work went on. It was a race against time. All depended on the question whether the

Siege of La Rochelle, 1627.

mole could be finished before the English fleet reappeared. Day and night in spite of many blunders and some misfortunes the huge mass slowly grew. The two wings approached nearer to each other, garnished with towers and palisades and batteries, until by the end of April 1628 the aperture between the two was small enough to be closed by a bridge of boats made into floating batteries, and fastened together by stout iron chains and defended by wooden stockades. It was hardly finished when the English fleet was sighted. For fifteen days the English hurled themselves with renewed and despairing vigour against the fortifications, but without success. On the 18th of May they sailed home and left La Rochelle to starve. Victory was now but a question of time.

Capture of La Rochelle, 1628.

Early in October the English fleet reappeared, but did not even dare to face the now impregnable defences of the besiegers. On the 28th the heroic Guiton worn out by famine accepted the inevitable. La Rochelle surrendered to the royal forces, its municipal privileges were abolished, its fortifications destroyed, its government placed in the hands of royal officials. Liberty of conscience was guaranteed to the citizens, but all vestige of independent authority was absolutely taken away.

After the capture of La Rochelle it was a comparatively easy matter to crush out the rebellion in the south. Early in 1629 the king put himself at the head of his army, marched into Languedoc and the district of the Cevennes, capturing the towns and destroying the castles. Rohan and the Huguenot leaders finding they could get no material assistance from Spain were obliged to submit. By the peace of Alais concluded in June 1629 the Huguenots ceased to retain any political power in France. Their guaranteed towns were handed over to the royal government, their fortresses were razed, their organisation was destroyed, their right of meeting was taken away, but their liberty of worship remained unimpaired.

Pacification of the south, 1629.

The peace of Alais marks the end of the first act of the

great drama which was being played by Richelieu in the history of France, the completion of the first, if not the most difficult, of the tasks to which he had devoted himself. By it the policy of the Edict of Nantes was carried to a legitimate conclusion. Religious peace was ensured by the recognition of religious division, while the danger that religious division should impair the national unity was effectually removed. It was a policy of national unity not of national uniformity. Richelieu did not care that all Frenchmen should be made outwardly to profess the same religious or political creed, should wear outwardly the same religious or political dress, as long as they were whole-hearted in the service of the Crown, as long as their liberty was not a weakness to the state. That it could not fail to be a source not merely of weakness, but of serious danger, to the state, as long as it was based upon political privilege and defended by political organisation, had already been abundantly proved in the course of the reign of Louis XIII. Every time that France had been threatened by the hostility of her neighbours, whether of Spain or England, a rising of the Huguenots had turned a serious foreign war into an acute national crisis. Every time that the Huguenots had risen in revolt they had allied themselves with the national enemies. Twice already had Richelieu's plans for the development of France been thwarted by the determination of the Huguenots to prefer their independence to their patriotism, and to look upon the foreign entanglements of the government merely as their opportunity. When a powerful political organisation deliberately sets itself to profit by the dangers of the nation, and to pursue its own interests to the detriment of those of the nation, it must either crush the government or be crushed by it. Richelieu enlisted the whole forces of the state in the campaign against the Huguenots, because he saw clearly that as long as their religious privileges were based on the possession of political power, the political exigencies of their position, and the fancied

Destruction of the political power of the Huguenots.

necessities as well as the inherent tendencies of their religion, must make them the enemies of France. The destruction of La Rochelle and the peace of Alais changed them at once from a formidable political party into a harmless religious sect. They ceased to be a danger to the state through their want of patriotism and desire for independence. They became a strength to France through their frugality, their manual skill, and their morality. Grateful for religious toleration and satisfied with it, in less than a generation they were found among the staunchest supporters of the monarchy, and effectually proved their gratitude by never stirring a finger to increase the embarrassments of the Crown in the perilous days of the *Fronde*.

Administrative reforms.

By the end of the year 1629 Richelieu might well look back with pride at the success which had attended his efforts to establish the unity of the nation by consolidating its forces under the power of the Crown. He had crushed a plot of the most formidable of his enemies at court. He had established his ascendency over the mind if not over the affections of the king. He had purified the financial administration so that a larger proportion of the taxes found their way into the treasury. He had put down a dangerous right of private war on a small scale under the guise of duelling. He had destroyed the castles and fortresses over large districts of France, notably in Brittany and the southern provinces. He had laid the foundation of the French navy. He had destroyed the political power and organisation of the Huguenots. But there was still much to be done. As long as the administration of the country and the raising and control of the army were in the hands or under the direction of the territorial nobility, all that he had hitherto accomplished was dependent upon his own precarious life and the still more precarious favour of the king. A successful court intrigue might destroy the whole structure at a blow, and throw France back into the slough of anarchy and peculation from which he had raised her. To obviate this danger

he applied himself during the rest of his life, as far as internal politics were concerned, to two special objects, the establishment of a bureaucracy—a civil service under the direct control of the Crown—and the organisation of the army upon a professional basis. In carrying out this latter object he had to proceed very carefully, partly owing to financial considerations, and partly to the necessity he felt for providing in the army a sphere of activity for the nobility, whose political and administrative power he was taking away; and it was not till the time of Louvois that the French army became thoroughly professional. But the active and open warfare in which France became engaged after 1635, as well as the growing importance of the infantry, enabled him to do much in the way of raising and organising infantry regiments directly by the Crown, without the interposition of any noble as colonel, and of appointing and promoting officers such as Fabert and Catinat, who did not belong to the noble class. For many years the nobles considered it below their dignity to serve in infantry regiments, a fortunate prejudice which made it easier for the government to get direct control over that important department of the army.

The year 1630 saw a vivid illustration of the danger to which the new system of government was exposed from the possible success of a court intrigue or the death of the invalid king. On his way back from the army in Italy to Paris, Louis was taken suddenly ill at Lyons with dysentery. For some days he hung between life and death. On the 22d of September all hope was given up. Gaston hurried to Paris to secure the government. The queen and the queen-mother made arrangements for the arrest of the cardinal, while Richelieu himself, seeing the labours of his life at an end, prepared to fly. But the king's constitution, much more vigorous than historians have supposed, triumphed not only over the disease but over the physicians. In spite of having been bled seven times in one week he still retained strength enough to rally, and Richelieu

Illness of Louis XIII., 1630.

remained for the moment safe. His enemies had to alter their plans. Determined not to be baulked of their prey the queen-mother and the queen organised a plot against the minister, which was joined by the two Marillacs, Bassompierre, and Orléans. On the 11th of November Marie in the presence of the king poured forth a torrent of furious invective against Madame de Combalet the niece of the cardinal. On Richelieu's entrance the storm was directed against him. Accusing him of treason and perfidy, she demanded from Louis his instant dismissal, and called upon the king to choose between his minister and her. For some hours Louis was in great doubt, and the fate of Richelieu hung in the balance. He even signed an order intrusting the command of the army to the maréchal de Marillac. All the courtiers thought the reign of Richelieu was over. Worn out and sick at heart, the king, to free himself from fresh importunities, retired to his hunting-box at Versailles; but once away from the pressure of the courtiers his good sense and patriotism re-asserted their power, and he determined to support his minister even against his wife and his mother. Sending for Richelieu privately to join him at Versailles, he put himself entirely into his hands, and the Day of Dupes was over. The vengeance of the outraged minister was terrific. Gaston of Orléans fled to Lorraine, Marie to the Spaniards at Brussels, the maréchal de Marillac was executed, his brother the chancellor died soon afterwards in exile, Bassompierre was imprisoned, the duchesses of Elboeuf, and Ornano banished, and the household of the queen filled with the cardinal's nominees.

The day of Dupes, 1630.

But exile increased rather than appeased their hatred of their conqueror. Gaston of Orléans, who had married the sister of the duke of Lorraine strongly against the wishes of Louis, who would not recognise the marriage, organised a fresh plot against the cardinal in 1632. To bring about the ruin of his hated enemy, he did not scruple to ally himself with the enemies of

Rising of Orléans and Montmorency, 1632.

his country. A combined force of Lorrainers and Spaniards was to invade France from the north-east, while the maréchal de Montmorency, the governor of Languedoc, raised the south. But Richelieu's good fortune did not desert him. The Swedes defeated the Spanish force on the Rhine, before it had even reached the frontiers of France. Lorraine, instead of France, had to bear the brunt of invasion, and 25,000 men under Louis himself quickly overran the country, and brought it permanently under French administration, although it was not formally united to the French monarchy till a century later. Meanwhile, Gaston of Orléans, at the head of a few thousand horsemen, had made his way to Montmorency in Languedoc, endeavouring to raise the country as he went against the iniquities of the minister. Not a man stirred. France had begun to realise that, harsh and oppressive as the government of Richelieu might be, it was far more just and far more tolerable than that of the nobles. In Languedoc Montmorency had succeeded in collecting a small army through his own personal popularity and the support of the estates, but the people refused to move, and he was powerless in the face of Schomberg and the royal troops. At Castlenaudary, on the 1st of September 1632, he was defeated and captured. On the 30th of October the last representative of the most illustrious of the great territorial nobles of France bowed his head before absolute monarchy on the scaffold.

A fresh proscription instigated by the implacable justice of the cardinal decimated Languedoc. The estates were dispersed, many of the nobility and gentry executed or sent to the galleys, five bishops deposed, the castles and fortifications of the towns destroyed. The hateful and miserable author of all this misery, Gaston himself, alone escaped. Protected by his birth and his readiness to betray his friends, he was permitted to take refuge in Brussels. There, in conjunction with the queen-mother and the Spaniards, he renewed his plots against

Suppression of the enemies of Richelieu.

France and the cardinal. But Richelieu now felt himself so thoroughly the master both of the nobles and of the nation, that Gaston was more dangerous to him as an open enemy than he would be as the leader of the disaffected at home. The promise of the king's favour, and renewed gifts to himself and his friends, soon induced him to betray the queen-mother and his hosts. In October 1634 he left his wife and his mother, was formally reconciled to the king and the cardinal, and retired into private life at his castle of Blois. Marie took refuge with her daughter in London, and Richelieu, freed for the time from all anxiety as to revolts and court intrigues, was enabled to turn his whole attention to the aggrandisement of France. In the following year, 1635, he entered openly into the Thirty Years' War.

Conspiracy of Cinq-Mars, 1642.

Once more but a few months before his death had Richelieu to defend himself against a court intrigue, but it was one which had its roots far more in personal ambition than in serious political rivalry. Cinq-Mars, the son of the marquis d'Effiat, the superintendent of finance, chafing under the stern and all-pervading masterfulness of the cardinal, abused his position of intimacy with the king, to try and poison his mind against his minister, who at that time was thought to be dying. Gaston, that veteran intriguer, and the duc de Bouillon the lord of the feudal dependency of Sedan, gave some political importance to the intrigue by lending it their countenance. The system of espionage established by Richelieu was far too good to permit intrigues of that sort to pass unnoticed. Still neither Richelieu nor the king interfered until they received proof that Cinq-Mars was actually in communication with the national enemy, the Spaniards. Then they struck, and as usual struck hard. The duc de Bouillon was compelled to surrender Sedan to France. Cinq-Mars and his friend de Thou perished on the scaffold, the last of a long list of victims, including five dukes, four counts, and a marshal of France, who were sacrificed by the pitiless cardinal to the genius of his country.

It is easy to fix the eyes so intently upon the destructive side of Richelieu's war with the nobles as to forget that in his sight it was by far the least important part of his work. The execution of traitors and peculators, the banishment of conspirators and *intrigantes*, were necessary steps towards the abolition of their political power, not the satisfaction of private vengeance. As with the Huguenots, so with the nobles, he did not wish to root them out, but to make them powerless for evil. As long as they enjoyed in right of their birth political power, based upon personal privilege and territorial possessions, so long would they refuse absolutely to render themselves amenable to the new institution of the prime-ministership, and would be always in danger of preferring the interests of their order to those of the state. When once they had been deprived of territorial power, they would naturally become the foremost servants of that Crown of which they had before been the rivals. They would be eager to serve, where before they had been determined to rule. Throughout the government of Richelieu the work of centralisation goes steadily on. A powerful structure of royal government is gradually built up, and the abortive plots, and the subsequent executions, mark the chafings of those who felt that power was slipping steadily away from them, and by a sure instinct directed their efforts against the man who was identified with the system which they hated. The destruction of the feudal castles, the development of the professional army, the substitution of royal administrative officers for those of the territorial nobles in Brittany and Languedoc, after the rebellions of Vendôme and Montmorency, the administration by the Crown directly through its own officials of the Huguenot towns, after the peace of Alais, and of Lorraine and Sedan after their conquest, the establishment of a royal post throughout the kingdom, were all steps in the direction of undermining the political power of the nobles. Finally in 1637 came the greatest blow of all. For many

Centralising policy of Richelieu.

Appointment of Intendants, 1637.

years Richelieu had been in the habit of appointing royal commissioners, under the name of Intendants, to take cognisance of certain matters of local administration, usually of a judicial nature. In 1637 by a royal edict, he appointed Intendants in each province, and placed in their hands the whole financial judicial and police administration. The effect of this was to concentrate powers, which had hitherto been enjoyed by the territorial nobility and the local administrative bodies, wholly in the hands of officials appointed by the minister and responsible to him alone. It created in fact a permanent civil service of professional men of the middle class, entirely dependent upon the royal favour, and thus did much to foster the growth of absolute power, and to give stability to the government, while checking the separatist tendencies of the local authorities.

The value of the administrative system organised by Richelieu soon became evident, when in the year 1643 France found herself once more threatened by the minority of the king and the weakness of a regency. The great cardinal maintained after his death the social and political order to the preservation of which he had devoted his life. The strength of the bureaucracy and the memory of the government of Richelieu alone preserved the authority of the monarchy amid the follies and the treasons of the *Fronde*. Richelieu himself died on the 4th of December 1642, and Louis followed him to the grave on the 14th of May 1643, leaving the crown to his infant son only four and a half years old. It was an anxious crisis for France. Louis XIII. in his distrust of his wife, Anne of Austria, whose influence had been from the time of her marriage uniformly exercised against the policy of the king and Richelieu, had endeavoured to control her exercise of political power after his death by nominating in his will a council of state, without whose advice she was powerless to act. But Anne, whose character developed with her responsibilities, would have none of such restrictions. Going to the Parlement de Paris she asked them

The Regency of 1643.

boldly to annul the will of her husband in the interests of herself and her son. The Parlement were by no means loth to add to their political privileges that of pronouncing a decisive word on the government of France. Without hesitation in their own interests they cancelled the will of the late king, suppressed the council of regency, and handed over the government of the country to Anne absolutely. It was an ominous thing that so soon after the death of Richelieu personal interests should again come to the front. But fortunately for France among those personal interests one was quickly seen to predominate over all others, which ensured the continuation of the policy of the great cardinal. Ever since the death of the Père Joseph, Richelieu had intrusted the details of his foreign policy to the management of the astute Italian Giulio Mazzarini, who attracted his notice in the negotiations with the Pope in 1628, entered the service of France at his request in 1639, was rewarded with a cardinal's hat in 1641, and was recommended to Louis by Richelieu as his successor in the prime ministership on his deathbed in 1642. By his cleverness, tact, and the gracefulness of his manners, Mazarin succeeded in making a deep impression upon the fastidious and loveless Anne of Austria. Surrounded by interested and selfish nobles, anxiously solicitous for the welfare of her son, she felt the necessity of a stronger arm on which to lean, and a sympathetic heart to which she might cling, and she chose Mazarin as the person whom she could intrust with the confidences of her womanly nature. Whether they were eventually secretly married or not is one of the unsolved problems of history, but that during the rest of their lives they were united by the strongest bonds of mutual affection and respect is beyond a doubt. To the astonishment of all who were not in the secret, Anne signalised her assumption of power by confirming Mazarin in the position of chief minister to which he had been designated by Richelieu, by continuing the foreign and domestic policy of the great cardinal, and by exiling afresh the dukes of

Mazarin appointed chief minister.

Vendôme Mercoeur and Guise and the duchess of Chevreuse who were already portioning out the vengeance they would take on the cardinalists.

Cardinal Mazarin was a very different character from his great predecessor. He was altogether of meaner mould. Richelieu was a man of original genius, who had made for himself his own position in the world, and had been the architect of his own fame. Mazarin would never have emerged from the ruck of mankind had not Richelieu led the way and given him a task to perform. It was his business to maintain, carry on, develop, that of Richelieu to create and establish. Soft and conciliatory in manner, graceful in address, tactful and considerate in business, deferential without being obsequious in conversation, he disarmed his opponents instead of conquering them, he persuaded instead of frightening them. Management not action was his strong point, finesse and diplomacy not the scaffold and the sword his weapons. An absolute master of dissimulation, he crept catlike through life, the outward picture of trustful innocence, concealing a callous heart and poisoned claws. It was a character as hateful to the open-hearted Frenchman as to the honest Englishman, and even if it had not been disfigured by the grossest avarice, could never have made itself tolerable to either. Italian to the backbone in his suppleness of character, his love of finesse, his courtly manners, his advancement of his relations, his art collections of rare books and sculptures, in the meanness of his avarice and in the prodigality of his display, he was looked upon by the French nobles and the bulk of the French people as a foreigner, who, having by unworthy arts made himself the master of the affections of a silly woman, a foreigner like himself, had fastened like a leech upon France and was sucking its lifeblood with insatiable voracity. Nothing can exceed the virulence of the hatred with which Mazarin was regarded. Not even the triumphs of the Thirty Years' War and the peace of Westphalia, not even the battle of Rocroy and the intoxicating cup of glory which

Character of Mazarin.

he offered to France could save him from the indiscriminating and loathsome abuse showered on him by that strange outburst of patriotism and selfishness, liberty and frivolity, known as the Fronde, of which hatred to him was the chief factor.

Ever since the dissolution of the Estates General of 1614, the Parlement de Paris had been growing in political importance. The hereditary nature of the offices of its members, the increased consideration shown to the classes from which they sprang by Richelieu in his war against the nobility, the double appeal to them in 1610 and 1643 to settle the government of France had all done much to persuade them of their power. The success of the rebellions against the royal authority in Spain and in England no doubt stimulated their desire to strike a blow for themselves and for liberty. An ill-advised imposition of an *octroi* duty upon all commodities entering Paris, issued in January 1648, gave them the opportunity of playing the part of constitutional leaders. The Parlement refused to register the edict. The court on this brought the boy-king down to the Parlement, and in a *lit de justice* the registration was effected. But the absurdity of trying to settle a grave constitutional question by the intervention of a boy of nine years old was too patent even for lawyers to swallow, and on the 16th of January the Parlement solemnly pronounced the registration illegal and invalid. A compromise was arrived at with regard to the particular question at issue, but the Parlement, so far from surrendering its political claims, appointed a committee consisting of representatives of its three chambers to take the reform of the state into consideration. On the 29th of June this representative committee called the Chambre de S. Louis issued its programme. It demanded the suppression of the Intendants, the reduction of the *taille* by a quarter, that every one arrested by order of the government should be brought before a

Outbreak of the Fronde.

Constitutional claims of the Parlement, 1648.

Its programme of reform.

magistrate within twenty-four hours of his arrest, and that the Parlement should have control over taxation. Here were the germs of a constitutional reform, which, if it could have been carried out, might have saved France from the worst evils of despotism without seriously impairing the royal authority. The establishment of a check on the financial administration, and of the principle of Habeas Corpus, even though lodged in an unrepresentative body like the Parlement, would have at least saved France from the collapse of the next century, and might have been the beginning of true constitutional life. But it was not to be. Mazarin appeared to yield to the storm, issued some of the decrees asked for, and waited his opportunity. The news of Condé's victory at Lens seemed to be the opportunity he desired. Under cover of a Te Deum sung in Nôtre Dame for the victory, Broussel the leader of the agitation against the court was arrested and put into prison. When this became known all Paris was seized with uncontrollable excitement. The long suppressed hatred of Mazarin burst out in fury. Barricades were raised. The citizens were armed and the Parlement accompanied by a furious and enthusiastic crowd marched in a body to demand the release of Broussel. The court was again obliged to yield, and Broussel was set at liberty, but as before Mazarin only drew back in the hope of making his final spring more effective. The peace of Westphalia would shortly put a disciplined army at his disposal, and then the position of the government would be impregnable. Paris might rage as much as it liked, but the days had gone by when the caprice of Paris decided the fortunes of France. Never was politician more mistaken. On the 13th of September the court withdrew to Ruel to free itself from the constant danger of tumults. Paris was immediately in an uproar. Persuaded by the clever and unscrupulous Gondi, bishop-coadjutor of Paris, a man who had nothing ecclesiastical about him except his title, Condé the military hero of the hour declared for the Parlement, and the court

Arrest and release of Broussel.

Acceptance of the reforms by the court, 1648.

once more following the favourite policy of Mazarin had to procrastinate. It returned to Paris, and on the 24th of October 1648 published an edict accepting and enforcing the whole of the demands of the Chambre de S. Louis.

Thus far the struggle had been in its main aspects constitutional. The Parlement de Paris, aided by the populace of the city, and taking advantage of the unpopularity of Mazarin, was endeavouring to curb the caprice of an irresponsible prime minister by assuming to itself control over the finances, and obtaining for all Frenchmen security against arbitrary arrest. Men felt vaguely that the constitution of France had altered in a way contrary to their interests of recent years. It was one thing to acknowledge the personal authority of the king as supreme, when it had to be exercised largely through local governors who were practically independent, and was from its very nature subject to the limitations which necessarily followed from the different characters of the supreme rulers. It was quite another thing to acknowledge that that personal supremacy could be delegated, and to be required to pay the same implicit obedience to a prime minister ruling through a bureaucracy of his own nominees when the king himself was a minor. The pressure of despotic rule had hitherto been little felt in France by the noble or the professional classes. They did not object to acknowledge and obey the will of a Henry IV., while a Henry III. hardly presumed to ask them to do so. It was quite a different thing when they were called upon to pay implicit reverence to a Mazarin following a Richelieu, when Louis XIII. seemed a *fainéant* and Louis XIV. was a boy. And behind the actual revolt against the irresponsible will of the minister lay the old rivalry between local authority and centralised administration. All local authorities whether of the governors or of the estates or of the Parlements had suffered under the centralising hand of Richelieu. In many cases they had been rooted out. France was becoming a *tabula rasa*, on which the hand of the king, or, worse still, of the minister, was alone

Unpopularity of the prime-ministership.

visible. So the Parlement de Paris felt, when it embarked on the struggle with the Crown, that it had behind it not merely the turbulence of a great city, or the bastard enthusiasm produced by professional agitators, but also a mass of thoughtful public opinion, traditions which lay deep in French history, and the political instincts of a growing nation. The example of England was sufficient to show that if it could, by whatever machinery, put an effectual check on the power of arbitrary taxation and the power of arbitrary imprisonment enjoyed by the government, it would have planted a seed from which the tree of liberty would assuredly spring. Of the four chief points of the charter of reform wrung from the Crown in October 1648, two, the reduction of the *taille* and the abolition of the Intendants, were merely passing remedies for special grievances of the time; the other two, the control over taxation and the Habeas Corpus, enunciated principles of government for the future, which if they could have been enforced, would have infallibly altered the whole history of France.

Importance of the reforms.

Unfortunately the Parlement itself was a body wholly unfit to lead a constitutional struggle. A close corporation of magistrates without representative character, without legislative or political rights, without traditions to which to appeal, without force on which to rely, was ludicrously unfit to stand forth as the champion of national interests against a Crown, which at that very moment had assumed the headship of European politics. Its ally the city of Paris was more unfit still. The close-fisted *bourgeoisie*, anxious for its privileges, and trembling for its money-bags, the turbulent populace of the streets intoxicated with its own importance, a small knot of interested agitators like Gondi, a larger body of selfish aristocrats and frivolous women, half fools, half knaves, like the duke of Beaufort and the duchesse de Longueville, were not the stuff of which successful constitutional revolutions are made. As a natural result the movement began at once to deteriorate. Hatred of Mazarin was a

Weakness of the Parlement.

common factor between the constitutionalists of the Parlement, the populace of the streets, and princes of the blood-royal and the nobility. To gain the support necessary to meet the forces of the Crown, the Parlement had to rely on the city and to appeal to the nobles. The latter eagerly joined the movement in order to recover their old political influence and to oust the hated minister. They cared not a sou for the Parlement. In their heart of hearts they hated and they dreaded the *noblesse de la robe* and their constitutional ambitions. They wanted back the old days of private anarchy and public plunder. They loathed the very idea of constitutional reform and common right. From the moment that the nobles took the direction of the movement it loses its constitutional character, it becomes only the last and the basest act in the long drama of the struggle between the nobles and the royal authority, it has for its direct and most unmistakable object, not the amelioration of a down-trodden people, but the overthrow of an unpopular minister.

The lead taken by the nobility and the populace.

From this point then the *Fronde* loses its chief interest and its story may be briefly told. Seeing the weakness of the court, the nobles flocked to take the leadership of the movement out of the hands of the Parlement and Gondi. The prince de Conti, the duc de Bouillon, the duc de Beaufort the popular *roi des halles*, the duc de Longueville and his intriguing fascinating wife, all rushed to Paris. Even Turenne, the patriot and the incorruptible, was for the moment seduced by the duchesse de Longueville to draw his sword against the court. Mazarin however succeeded in detaching Condé from the side of the rebellion. On the 6th of January 1649 the court fled secretly to S. Germain, and nominating Condé to the command of its army prepared to bring Paris to its senses by open war. But for the time both sides shrunk from so terrible an alternative, and through the intervention of Molé, the president of one of the chambers of the Parlement and a man of unblemished

Factiousness of the movement.

integrity, the peace of Ruel was arranged on the 1st of April 1649 on the basis of the *status quo*. For nearly a year quiet was restored, but it was a peace only in name, the intrigues, the libels, and the agitation continued as before. Condé in particular made himself odious to every one by the insolence of his pride and the theatrical ebullitions of his passionate nature. Even the patience of Mazarin became exhausted, and on the 18th of January 1650 he astonished France by suddenly committing Condé Conti and Longueville to prison. It was a gross blunder. The imprisonment of the princes gave his enemies what they most wanted, a common rallying cry, while the arbitrary character of the proceeding disgusted moderate men. The feeling became general that France would never gain peace as long as Mazarin remained at the head of affairs. The provinces of Normandy Guienne and Burgundy declared against the court, and the *Fronde* recommenced with a definite programme of the release of the princes and the banishment of Mazarin. Like so many other risings against royal authority, it took the outward form of a rising in the true interests of the Crown to rid it of a bad and incapable minister. The revolts were put down in Normandy and Burgundy without difficulty, in Guienne by the capture of Bordeaux after a protracted siege by the queen-mother and the young king in person, but the flame continued to spread. Paris declared against the court. The duc d'Orléans joined the movement. Turenne invaded France at the head of a Spanish army, but was defeated by Duplessis near Rethel on the 17th of December. Mazarin, ever timid, determined to yield. In January 1651 he left France secretly, having ordered the release of the princes, and betook himself to Brühl in the electorate of Köln from whence he still directed affairs by correspondence with the queen-mother and the ministers, Lionne Letellier and Servien. On the news of the retirement of Mazarin, the *Fronde* was beside itself with joy,

The Peace of Ruel, 1649.

Imprisonment of the princes, 1650.

The risings in the provinces.

Flight of Mazarin, 1651.

the Parlement passed a decree of banishment against him, and sold his library and works of art. Paris treated the court as its prisoners, and received the princes in triumph on their return from prison in February 1651. But Condé soon made himself more intolerable to the leaders of the *Fronde* by his rapacity and violence than he had been before to Mazarin; and Anne by a clever move was able to detach the *Frondeurs* from him and drive him into open rebellion against the young king who had just been declared of age.

The quarrel now openly appeared in its true light of a struggle between the nobles and the king. Condé, supported by Nemours, Le Rochefoucauld, La Tremouille and others of the nobles, raised the south in revolt. Anne and the king on their side put three armies in the field. Turenne came back to his allegiance, and Mazarin returned from his self-imposed exile and joined the court at Poitiers on the 28th of February 1652. For eight months civil war raged and France lay at the mercy of rival armies, while the foreign enemy took advantage of her misery to advance his frontiers in the north-east. It looked as if the very policy which Richelieu and Mazarin had carried out so ruthlessly at the expense of Germany was about to recoil on the head of France. But no sooner were the two sides definitely arrayed against each other as the party of Condé and the nobility against the party of Mazarin and the royalists, than it was seen that though Paris would fight to the death against Mazarin, France would not fight against the king. Condé found no adequate support in the country. Foiled by the superior military genius of Turenne near Blenau in April, he was defeated at the Faubourg S. Antoine in July, and must have been utterly destroyed, had not the energy and enthusiasm of Mademoiselle, the daughter of Gaston of Orléans, persuaded the citizens of Paris to admit him and his beaten army within the walls. But Paris had no love for Condé. It simply cherished an undying hatred for Mazarin, and a supreme

The movement a struggle between the nobles and the Crown.

Quarrel between Condé and Paris.

conviction of its own importance. It was the only force in France still opposed to the court, and Mazarin found himself in consequence the only obstacle to peace. By a voluntary retirement to Sedan in August 1652, he built a bridge by which the Parisians could return to their allegiance to the king without compromising their opposition to the minister. They eagerly availed themselves of it. Condé, finding himself deserted on all sides, openly joined the enemies of France, and carried on for eight years more a foreign war against his country as the leader of the armies of Spain. On the 21st of October Louis entered Paris at the head of his army and the *Fronde* was at an end. From that moment the royal authority shone out pre-eminent over all the forces of the country until the Revolution. Constitutionalism as well as privilege, local feeling as well as legal right lay helpless before the all-mastering Crown. The leaders of the *Fronde* were exiled, many of its supporters put to death on various pretexts, none of them admitted even to the shadow of political power. The Parlement were forbidden to deal either directly or indirectly with the affairs of state. For a century it became but the registration office of the royal edicts and the channel of the royal justice, while the nobles, deprived of all political power and sadly weakened in local influence, accepted the service of a splendid court in willing exchange for the precarious dignity of half-independent feudatories.

Flight of Condé, and the end of the Fronde, 1652.

When the triumph of the court was assured, Mazarin emerged from his retirement and again took up the reins of government. For the nine years that were left to him of life and power, he strove to repair the havoc wrought by the *Fronde* in his private fortune and his public policy. His best efforts were directed to the maintenance of the war with Spain, which with the help of England was brought to such a successful issue by the peace of the Pyrenees in 1660. In domestic affairs he paid little attention to anything except the amassing of a

Return of Mazarin to power.

prodigious fortune in the management of which Colbert received his first lessons of finance. He had none of Richelieu's love for the greatness of France. He did nothing for her arts, her literature, or her sciences. He cared even less than Richelieu for the welfare and happiness of the people. His financial administration was corrupt to the core; offices were sold, revenue anticipated, state property alienated for the personal advantage of the cardinal. Had it not been that he was soon succeeded by the best finance minister that France ever produced, the world would not so lightly have passed over the fact that Mazarin on his death in March 1661 bequeathed to Louis XIV., not merely absolute power at home and the leadership of Europe abroad, but a home administration at once so oppressive and so corrupt, that had it lasted but a few years longer, France could hardly have escaped hopeless bankruptcy and irretrievable ruin.

CHAPTER VIII

NORTHERN EUROPE TO THE TREATY OF OLIVA

Character and policy of Oxenstjerna—The Form of Government—War between Sweden and Denmark—Treaty of Brömsebro—Christina of Sweden—Her character and ability—Frederick William of Brandenburg—His character and political aims—The question of Pomerania—Condition of his dominions at his accession—His withdrawal from the Thirty Years' War—Acquisition of east Pomerania—Establishment of his personal authority—His intrigues against Charles X. of Sweden—Acknowledgment of Swedish suzerainty—He joins Charles X. against Poland—Obtains independence by the treaties of Labiau and Wehlau—Death of Charles X.—The pacification of the north.

Position of Sweden, 1632.

WHILE the great powers of Europe were battling for the Rhine and the Pyrenees, the smaller nations of the north were struggling for the command of the Baltic. It was a contest in which Denmark played the part of the Empire, the traditional but feeble possessor of rightful authority, while Sweden, like another France, strong in her new-found national unity, was impelled by her geographical position to claim a freedom which could not fail to end in leadership. When Gustavus Adolphus fell on the field of Lützen in 1632 he had succeeded in winning for his country supremacy on the Baltic and a foothold on German soil; but his life had been too short, his career too meteor-like for him to have had time to consolidate by his statesmanship what he had won by his genius. That task was left to his friend and confidant, Axel Oxenstjerna, during the minority of the young Christina who was only four and a half years old when her father died. The man was well fitted to the task. Cautious,

Character and policy of Oxenstjerna.

deliberate, and cold-blooded, complete master of his emotions, he was a man of fixed ideas and tenacious policy. Nothing moved him, nothing changed him. Twice only in a long and anxious life did he know what it was to be sleepless, once after the battle of Lützen, once after the battle of Nördlingen. Patriotism in him took bodily form in the House of Vasa and Gustavus Adolphus. During the life of the king his whole energies were devoted to carrying out his master's wishes, after his death to the completion of his master's policy. In the Thirty Years' War, as we have seen, he was the most strenuous and uncompromising enemy of peace. The miseries of Germany, the dangerous ambition of France, even the deterioration of his own country, were as nothing to him compared with the duty of obtaining for Sweden all that Gustavus might fairly have claimed. It required the personal intervention of the young queen herself to prevent her minister from ruining the country in order to preserve its dignity. At home his chief work was to place on a permanent basis the alliance of the crown with the official nobility, which it had been the special object of Gustavus Adolphus to create as a counterpoise to the influence of the hereditary nobility and the clergy.

In the Form of Government adopted in 1634, Sweden received from Oxenstjerna's hands the first of modern written constitutions. By it Lutheranism in the form of the Confession of Augsburg was imposed upon the sovereign and all his subjects. Government was vested in the king, advised by a senate of twenty members chosen by him from the nobility, to whom were added five *ex officio* members being the great officers of state, *i.e.* the steward, the marshal, the treasurer, the chancellor and the admiral. The whole direction of affairs during the illness or minority of the king was placed in their hands, subject only to the provision that all laws passed, privileges conferred, and alienation of crown lands effected during the incapacity of the king must receive his subsequent ratification. Other provisions of

The Form of Government, 1634.

a less important nature regulated the administration of justice, but in all of them the same care for securing the supremacy of the noble and official class is everywhere observable. In fact, the result of the Form of Government was to place the chief direction of affairs in Sweden for nearly fifty years in the hands of a narrow aristocratic clique of official families. During the minority of Christina, no less than three out of the five great officers of state were members of the Oxenstjerna family alone. The policy of the regency was conceived in the interests of the nobility. They profited by the continuance of the war in Germany, for to them fell the high commands in the army, and the opportunities of amassing wealth by plunder and confiscation. They profited equally by the necessities of the Crown at home, for they became the possessors either by purchase or grant of large tracts of crown lands made over to them by the government, partly to secure their loyalty and partly to relieve its embarrassments. But what was meat to the nobles was poison to the peasantry. The people soon found that the court noble or the successful general was a far harder master to serve than ever the Crown had been. The long-continued war raised the taxes, checked the growth of manufactures, and drained the country of its best peasant blood, only to return to it a body of brigand soldiers ruined in morals and incapable of honest industry. Had it lasted but a few years longer, it is by no means improbable that Oxenstjerna would have found that he had purchased a foreign empire at the cost of a domestic revolution. The quick intelligence of Christina, brought up as she was in Sweden, while the Chancellor was forced to spend a large part of his time in Germany, appreciated the danger; and this, quite as much as her natural humanity, prompted her to put an end to a war, which had ceased to have a serious political object, and was being waged in the interests of a class and in honour of a memory.

The government a narrow oligarchy.

In the war with Denmark which broke out in 1643 the

narrow but unflinching patriotism of Oxenstjerna showed itself to better advantage. Free passage through the Sound and the Belts for Swedish ships was as much a commercial necessity for the development of Swedish trade, as free passage through the passes of Savoy was a military necessity for the aggrandisement of France. But Denmark seated astride of the islands, with one foot on Halland and the other on Jutland, by merely raising the dues payable for the passage of ships, could crush the nascent trade at its birth. In doing so it had to reckon not merely with Sweden but with the more important maritime countries of Holland and England who carried on with Sweden, through the Sound, a prosperous and growing trade in skins, fur and copper, and were therefore keenly interested in the question of the Sound tolls. But in 1639, seeing England involved in domestic trouble, and Holland fully occupied in the ceaseless struggle with Spain, Christian IV. thought the opportunity had come for vigorous action. He raised the tolls on the Sound, attempted to take the lead in German affairs by putting himself forward as mediator in the negotiations for peace, and in July 1640 directly insulted the government of Sweden by openly assisting the queen-mother, Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg to escape from the dignified seclusion in which she was kept. For the moment Oxenstjerna had to temporise, for the affairs of Germany absorbed his whole energies, but two years later the opportunity came. Torstenson was suddenly directed upon Holstein without any declaration of war, and in conjunction with Horn quickly overran the whole of the mainland. Christian taken by surprise had to betake himself to his islands and his ships. There he fought like a hero, holding his own manfully for two summers against the combined efforts of Swedish fleets and Dutch sailors. But the odds were too many for him, and after a severe defeat in October 1644 he found himself obliged to sue for peace. The next year, in August 1645, the treaty of Brömsebro was negotiated through the mediation of France

War with Denmark, 1643.

The treaty of Brömsebro, 1645.

between Christian and Oxenstjerna. By it Sweden was entirely relieved from the payments of tolls on the Sound and the Belts, and acquired the province of Halland on terms which practically involved its annexation. However questionable on the score of public faith its beginning may have been, there is no doubt that this was one of the most important and useful wars waged by Sweden in the seventeenth century. At very little expense to herself, she completed the work of national consolidation by making Denmark retire across the natural frontier of the sea, and secured for the future the free and unhampered development of her commerce. Both of them were acquisitions essential for her national well-being, and when once gained were gained for all time. The more showy rewards of the peace of Westphalia on the contrary, though they mark the zenith of the political glory of Oxenstjerna, were in no way the best gifts which Sweden received at his hands. They contained in themselves the fruit of future contests. Like the battles of Creci and Poitiers and the peace of Bretigni, the battles of Breitenfeld and Wittstock and the peace of Westphalia covered the conqueror with military glory at the cost of a hundred years of war.

Acquisition of Halland and freedom from the Sound dues.

In this long drama of dull warfare, the reign of Christina is a short but picturesque interlude. Alone among Swedes and almost alone among sovereigns, she loved to live a life of culture among men of culture. She was not a student, but a master of classical literature, not the patron of men of letters, but herself a member of the sacred band. It is therefore easy to exaggerate the importance of her reign as an epoch in the civilisation of her country. The learning and the culture which gathered round Christina at Stockholm fixed no roots in the country, answered to no demand even in the university. It was a pure exotic, called into existence by the strange accident that Sweden had a cultured queen. It died on her abdication. It was personal and artificial not national and spontaneous, as unlike the great outburst of

Christina of Sweden.

English literature under Elizabeth with which it has sometimes been compared, as the bouquet of the theatre to the flowers of the Alps. The men of letters themselves formed, it is to be feared, an unwelcome and unpopular element in the half barbaric court. To the rough nobles they were but a côterie of the queen's friends, a clique with whom she liked to live, a sort of superior race of pet animals which Sweden had to feed and maintain in order to please the queen. But the very fact that some of the most intellectual minds of the day were content to endure the cold and discomforts of Swedish simplicity, and the hardly concealed dislike of a barbarous and homely people, rather than lose the distinction of being numbered among the friends of Christina, is no mean tribute to her character and her mind. To be with her, to be received into her friendship, to listen to her conversation, to take part in her studies, this was the attraction which made Stockholm for the moment the Athens of the north.

Christina is one of those few sovereigns who have made history by sheer force of personal character. In the whole range of the seventeenth century, there is no crowned head who can pretend to equality with her in the rare gifts of originality and distinction. A sworn foe to conventionality in all forms, with a mind uncompromisingly logical, she went straight to the root of a matter, to the horror of diplomatists and courtiers. The salient point of her character is her straightforwardness. There was nothing artificial about her and singularly little which was not original. She formed her own conceptions of policy, of religion, of culture, of manners. She adhered to them at all costs. She carried them out unhesitatingly. When one of them came into collision with another, instantly she surrendered the less to the greater. She abdicated the crown of Sweden because she was convinced that she ought to become a Roman Catholic. She procured the recognition of Charles Gustavus as her successor because she was determined not to marry. At the age of eighteen she forced the all-powerful Chancellor into making a

Character of Christina.

peace which he loathed. Ten years later, after her abdication, she murdered her steward Monaleschi through a wilfully mistaken view of her sovereign rights. Throughout her life she was the same,—clear-minded, self-willed, of keen decision and petulant temper, warmhearted and true to those she loved, malicious to those she disliked, a hater of humbug, a despiser of conventionality, cynical in speech, generous in action, prodigal with money, avaricious of fame, hating and hated by women, always attractive to men. In truth Christina was one of nature's mistakes. She was intended for a man. Masculine in intellect, masculine in will, masculine in bodily endurance, masculine in the roughness of her sensibilities, she showed her sex mainly in her dislike of women. She knew herself to be a man, and resented bitterly the freak of nature which had clothed her with a woman's form. She dressed like a man, rode like a man, at times swore like a man, and confessed that one of her greatest desires was to see a battle. No noble at the Swedish court could tire her when hunting, or could surpass her presence of mind in the hour of danger. She knew not what fear was, she was never seen in tears. Yet there was something feminine in her love of intrigue, her passion for notoriety, her want of shame. At the French court she busied herself in making mischief between the young king and his mother by encouraging his infatuation for Marie Mancini. She delighted in shocking the etiquette of the royal circle by the freedom of her conversation and the unconventionality of her attitudes, and she went out of her way to outrage all sense of propriety by choosing the famous courtesan Ninon de L'Enclos as the only Frenchwoman to whom she would be decently civil. When a queen demeans herself thus, she must expect to make enemies, and Christina had only herself to thank if she was afterwards denied permission to visit the French court at Paris, and found among French women her most persistent detractors.

Abdications among sovereigns are so rare that the attention of historians has been naturally attracted by the picturesqueness

of that of Christina to the detriment of her real title to fame. In the ten years of her rule over Sweden she conducted a great war to a glorious end, she established her authority by sheer ascendency of character over a narrow and jealous oligarchy, she settled a most difficult constitutional question, that of the devolution of the Crown, in the best way for the nation, by her own firmness of will. She made herself beloved by her people, and easily suppressed the conspiracy of Messenius in spite of its wide ramifications among the democracy. She made Stockholm for the time the most learned and cultured court of Europe. Above all when her own religious convictions forced her into antagonism with the constitution of her country, she never hesitated to prefer the interests of her country to her own dignity. She recognised from the first that in the seventeenth century it was impossible for Sweden to permit her sovereign to be of any religion except that of Luther, and when she had made up her mind to become a Roman Catholic she accepted the inevitable and abdicated her throne. There are few sovereigns who can claim to have done more for their country by activity or by renunciation than Christina. Her abdication was right and unavoidable. The mistake she made lay in not carrying it far enough. She ought to have retired into private life, but this was too great a self-denial for so active a mind and so vigorous a personality. She ceased to be queen of Sweden, but she determined still to be queen. She maintained royal state, she claimed royal rights, she plunged into intrigue, she interfered in politics, she tried to dominate over literature and taste. Deprived of all right to express, and shorn of all power to enforce, her wishes, she soon sank into becoming the common bore of Europe, and found herself politely relegated to her palace at Rome, where she became one of the sights of the city and the leader of a fashionable and artistic côterie.

Her political ability.

While Christina was witching the northern world by the vigour and charm of her personality, Brandenburg under the cautious and unscrupulous Frederick William was slowly

winning its way to predominance in north Germany. No two persons could well be more different than the queen and the elector, whom at one time a marriage project of Gustavus Adolphus had attempted to unite in a most unequal yoke. Christina, worldly though she might be in her love of mischief-making and petulance of disposition, was essentially a woman of noble character and lofty aspirations. She lived amongst great thoughts and high ideals. Frederick William grovelled upon the earth, and cherished its mire and its dirt if only he could possess himself of one acre the more of it. A true Hohenzollern in his absolute identification of his country with his own crown, he never rose above the pure selfishness of patriotism. Not one spark of generosity illuminated his policy, not one grain of idealism coloured his ambition, no sentiment of moral right ever interfered with his judgment, no fear of future retribution arrested his action. Mean-minded, false, and unscrupulous, he was the first sovereign to display the principles of seventeenth century Machiavellianism, stripped of their cloak of Italian refinement, in all the hideous brutality of German coarseness. Yet the political world was not the worse for the rule of the Great Elector. Putting all questions of right and wrong on one side, the success achieved by Frederick William was in the direction of progress. The Thirty Years' War left Germany shattered into fragments as if by the stroke of a giant's hammer, at a time when all Europe was drawing itself together and coalescing into powerful states. Had that disintegration continued, had no one come forward to establish a power in northern Europe, which might at any rate form a nucleus round which the floating atoms of northern Germany and northern Protestantism might gather, central Europe must have fallen a prey to French ambition or Russian barbarism. Events have shown clearly enough, that neither Sweden, nor England, nor the United Provinces, could have saved Europe from such a catastrophe, had there not been in northern Germany itself a power, centralised in government

Frederick William of Brandenburg.

Ultimate aim of his policy.

and military in spirit, which could unfurl the flag of German nationality. To found such a power was the work of the Great Elector's life, and before his death the results had made themselves visible in European politics. He it is who is the real founder of the state of Prussia. Cradled in the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, nourished by the falseness and the tyranny of Frederick William, ushered into manhood by the cynical ambition of Frederick the Great, she has yet become in her steady protest against French domination one of the chief bulwarks of European order, in her assertion of German unity the centre of the noblest of German aspirations.

When Frederick William succeeded his father in the electorate of Brandenburg in 1640 no one would have predicted that from that desolate discredited and divided state was to arise the hope of Germany. The policy of neutrality in the earlier years of the war, adopted not without a certain amount of shrewdness by George William in conjunction with his friend John George of Saxony, had broken down under the menace of the guns of Gustavus Adolphus and the invasion of Tilly. But the league between the Swedes and the elector could never be anything more than hollow, unless the former were prepared to surrender the rights of a conqueror over Pomerania. George William was the acknowledged heir of the old duke Boguslav. Pomerania, with its extensive seaboard, was just what Brandenburg wanted for her national development, and the Elector had been accustomed to look upon it as his own. The landing of Gustavus Adolphus changed the whole face of affairs in a moment. Pomerania became just as important to the Swedes as a basis of communication with Sweden and the Baltic, as it was to Brandenburg as a step in her aggrandisement. Why should the Swedes, who had saved the country from the hands of Wallenstein, surrender it tamely to George William who had not stirred one finger of his own free will on behalf of the Protestant cause? Naturally enough the Swedes stuck obstinately

Rivalry between Brandenburg and Sweden in the Thirty Years' War.

to their rights of conquest. Never would Oxenstjerna yield to the technical claims of Brandenburg, what Gustavus Adolphus had wrested from the enemy by force of arms. Never would Brandenburg abate her just and legal demands in the face of a selfish and brutal conqueror. So as time went on Sweden became far more the national enemy of Brandenburg than the Emperor had ever been. The unfortunate mark, lying as it did on the straight road between Bohemia and the Baltic, was harried alternately by the armies of both sides as the fortune of war ebbed and flowed. In 1635 George William accepted the treaty of Prague, but that gave no respite to his unlucky domain. In 1638, unable to find sustenance in the impoverished mark, he removed his court to Königsberg in east Prussia, where he died worn out with misery and failure in 1640, leaving his son Frederick William at the age of twenty the possessor of little land and many claims.

The territories owned by Frederick William on his accession were divided into three quite separate districts.[1] The old possessions of the house of Hohenzollern in north Europe consisted of the mark of Brandenburg, subdivided for administrative purposes into the old mark, the middle mark and the new mark, which they had ruled as margraves and as electors since the beginning of the fifteenth century. This country, purely German, was like other German states part of the Empire, subject to the legal authority of the Emperor and had its own diet with vague powers of counsel and control over the elector in local affairs. On the east of the Vistula, altogether outside of the limits of the Empire, was the duchy of east Prussia, which had become the hereditary possession of the Hohenzollerns by one of the accidents of the Reformation. The country belonged to the Order of the Teutonic Knights, and was subject to the suzerainty of Poland, but in 1525 the Knights accepted the Lutheran Reformation, dissolved the Order, and formed their territory into a duchy hereditary in the house of the grand

Brandenburg at the accession of Frederick William, 1640.

The mark of Brandenburg.

The duchy of East Prussia.

[1] See map facing p. 124.

master of the time, count Albert of Hohenzollern. At the beginning of the seventeenth century his line became merged in that of the Brandenburg branch of the family, and the elector of Brandenburg became also duke of east Prussia. Here, as in the mark, the existence of a diet in which sat both nobles and burghers formed a constitutional check on the will of the ruler, a check all the more effective because of the reluctance with which the people of east Prussia and their feudal suzerain the king of Poland had acknowledged the rights of the Brandenburg branch to the duchy. But the territorial claims of the young elector did not stop with the German mark of Brandenburg, the Polish duchy of east Prussia, and the succession to the German duchy of Pomerania. Within the limits of the Empire, stretching along both banks of the Rhine, in the neighbourhood of Köln, lay the duchies of Cleves, Jülich, Berg and Mark, to which the elector of Brandenburg and the count of Neuburg had put in claims as we have seen in 1609 and thereby very nearly precipitated the great war. By the treaty of Xanten, concluded in 1614 and practically renewed in 1630, the disputed territory was divided between the claimants, and the duchies of Cleves Mark and Ravensberg fell to the share of Brandenburg. During the war, however, Brandenburg was unable to make its power recognised over its new domains. The country was for some time the battleground of the Spaniards and the Dutch. As the tide of war rolled away from the lower Rhine it was occupied and practically administered by the Dutch, and when peace was restored Frederick William found himself obliged to assert what was to all intents and purposes a new sovereignty.

Duchy of Cleves.

Bearing in mind the scattered character of the Brandenburg possessions, a glance at the map is sufficient to show how geographical considerations dictated to the young elector his policy, and inspired his territorial ambitions. If only he could make good his claims on Pomerania, or at least on the eastern part of it,

Aims of Frederick William.

there would be nothing but the strip of west Prussia along the banks of the Vistula to separate his German dominions from his duchy of east Prussia. A successful war, or a lucky diplomatic stroke, might raise him at once into the position of the greatest power in the north. Side by side with the territorial dream went as was natural in a prince of the seventeenth century a dynastic ambition. Already events had made his dependence upon the Emperor almost nominal, the same success which won him west Prussia and united his dominions would also free him from his feudal vassalage to Poland. Once thoroughly independent of foreign authority he could turn his attention to his own subjects, and on the ruins of the effete and discredited diets raise, like Richelieu in France, a highly centralised military sovereignty in which the crown should be all in all. Such was the policy laid down for himself and his house by the Great Elector, and adhered to unflinchingly by his descendants ever since. Centralisation of the government, military rule, constant territorial aggrandisement have been the characteristics of the Prussian monarchy, and have ended in making out of the disjointed and turbulent dominions of Frederick William, a united and peaceful kingdom, which stretches from Russia to Belgium, and embraces in its ample folds the valleys of the Rhine, the Elbe, the Oder and the Vistula.

Directly in the way of the realisation of the least of these designs, as the Great Elector well knew, lay the hostile powers of Sweden and of Poland. He could not touch Pomerania without encountering the bitter jealousy of Sweden, he could not advance an inch towards the union of east Prussia and Brandenburg without first destroying the integrity of Poland. Over the prostrate bodies of these formidable neighbours lay the only road to his territorial ambition. It was a road beset with difficulties. What chance could the barren ravaged and disunited Brandenburg have in an unequal contest with Sweden, at that time admittedly the first military power in northern Europe? How

Unavoidable hostility of Sweden and Poland.

could the half-starved German peasant withstand the onslaught of the brave though undisciplined masses of Polish cavalry? Frederick William knew that he must wait for a favourable opportunity, and spent the time in anxious preparation. His first care was to transfer the conduct of affairs in the mark from the hands of his father's minister, Schwartzenburg, who was devoted to the Emperor, to his own, and to reorganise the army under himself. In this he was aided by the death of Schwartzenburg in 1641, and the subsequent revolt of his son and the discontented officers. Having thus got at his back a force upon which he could depend he openly broke with the Emperor, and with the full approbation of the diet entered into negotiations with the Swedes for a treaty of neutrality. Then turning his attention to the duchy of east Prussia, where the estates were trying to establish their superiority over him, with a diplomatic skill rarely found in a man of twenty, he succeeded in sowing dissensions between the nobles and the representatives of the towns, who took the lead in opposing his authority. By winning the former over to his side he was able to procure the recognition of his rule from John Casimir, king of Poland, in spite of the protest of the towns, and thus to enter legally upon his sovereignty. In 1643 the treaty with Sweden was successfully concluded, and for the rest of the war Brandenburg was practically free from the ravages of the rival armies. The breathing space thus gained was devoted by Frederick William to the reorganisation of the finances and the training of the army, and Brandenburg was in consequence enabled to assert her claims to consideration in the negotiations at Münster and Osnabrück with a force which would have appeared incredible in the days of George William. When the peace of Westphalia was finally settled it was found that Brandenburg was given the right of annexing the secularised bishoprics of Magdeburg, Halberstadt, Minden

Establishment of his personal authority in Brandenburg and East Prussia, 1641.

His withdrawal from the Thirty Years' War, 1643.

Gains of Brandenburg at the peace of Westphalia, 1648.

and Camin, and the duchy of eastern Pomerania. But the larger part of the lands were at the time of the conclusion of peace in the military occupation of the Swedes, and they were not at all disposed to evacuate them, until they had been paid the indemnity for their expenses which had been secured to them by the peace. Finally however, after much negotiation and many delays, the patience and skill of the Great Elector prevailed over all obstacles, and the year 1653 saw the back of the last Swedish soldier in retreat from eastern Pomerania.

Occupation of Eastern Pomerania, 1653.

The year 1653 closes the first chapter of the story of the aggrandisement of Brandenburg. The territory of the elector now stretched in a compact mass across north Germany from Halberstadt to the Baltic. It comprised parts of the fertile valleys of the Elbe the Havel and the Oder with their industrious populations, as well as the important coast line of eastern Pomerania with its numerous harbours. Detached from the central mass lay the duchy of east Prussia beyond the Vistula and the scattered districts of Cleves and Mark upon the Rhine and of Ravensberg and Minden upon the Weser. Inferior in prestige and military power to Sweden, inferior in extent to Poland, Brandenburg nevertheless emerged from the Thirty Years' War stronger, both actually and relatively, than she was when the struggle began. There was no German power in north Germany her equal in strength, and no power in north Europe her superior in government. Since he had come to the throne Frederick William had steadily followed the policy of centralising the administration under himself and crushing the independent rights of the diets. In Brandenburg itself, where the advantages of centralisation under so able and keen-sighted a ruler were quickly seen, the opposition was never formidable, and in 1653, the very year of the annexation of eastern Pomerania, the ancient diet went quietly into perpetual sleep for want of being summoned. In east Prussia and in Cleves the work was far more difficult, and

Position of Brandenburg, 1653.

the Elector had to content himself for a time with crushing all serious opposition by the employment of Brandenburg soldiers to keep order, a proceeding which although illegal was extremely effective.

In 1655 occurred an event which called forth all the Great Elector's powers of statesmanship. The old hostility between Poland and Sweden, the two most dangerous neighbours of Brandenburg, suddenly flamed out again. John Casimir, king of Poland, refused to acknowledge Charles Gustavus, who had succeeded to the Swedish throne on the abdication of Christina. Charles, who had been brought up in the school of the Thirty Years' War and was no mean soldier, determined to avenge the insult, and demanded from the Great Elector the right of passage through eastern Pomerania into Poland, in order to avoid the difficult task of the siege of the sea fortress of Dantzig, which had cost Gustavus Adolphus many weary hours some twenty-five years before. Frederick William was not in a position to resist, and after making a few demonstrations to cover appearances, gave the required permission. The Swedes, using Pomerania as their basis of operations, poured across Brandenburg into Poland, defeated John Casimir, drove him back on Cracow and then returned leisurely into west Prussia to form the siege of Dantzig. The Great Elector now thought he saw his opportunity. The Poles were beaten not conquered. Denmark was ever ready to strike a blow at her old enemy across the Baltic. Charles X. was fully occupied round Dantzig. A well-planned alliance and a well-timed stroke might bring Sweden to her knees and win his own independence of Poland. But Charles was too quick for him. Hearing of the negotiations in the middle of the winter of 1655-56 he at once broke up his camp and marched into east Prussia on Königsberg. Frederick William had to make his peace as best he could. By the treaty of Königsberg,

War between Sweden and Poland, 1655.

Unsuccessful intrigue of Frederick William against Sweden.

Acknowledgment of Swedish suzerainty over East Prussia, 1656.

developed by the treaty of Marienbad, concluded in June 1656, Brandenburg was forced to acknowledge the suzerainty of Sweden over east Prussia, instead of that of Poland, to grant to the Swedes free passage through the country, and to provide a contingent to serve under Swedish orders in the Polish war.

It was a bitter lesson to the Great Elector, but ever patient and ever trustful of his own diplomatic skill; he continued his policy and awaited a more favourable opportunity, but for the present he had to submit to the inevitable. The Brandenburg contingent marched with Charles X. and the Swedish army to Warsaw, and did their share in the winning of the great three days' battle in July 1656, which placed Poland at the feet of the Swedes. But the victory of Charles X. was, as is so often the case, the beginning of his difficulties. It was always easy to defeat a Polish army, it was almost impossible to reduce the country to submission. The intrigues of the Great Elector began to bear fruit. While Charles was planning the pursuit of John Casimir into the recesses of the forests of Galicia, the king of Denmark was preparing to invade Sweden itself, the Russians declared war, and a horde of Tartars and Lithuanians poured into east Prussia. Charles X. found himself in the middle of a hostile country, with a doubtful ally, surrounded by a host of enemies. Frederick William insisted on an immediate return to defend east Prussia from the invaders. Charles could not resist so plausible a demand. With a heavy heart he retired from the scene of his victory into west Prussia, where he took ship for Denmark, having first done what he could to retain Frederick William in his enforced alliance by recognising the independence of east Prussia in the treaty of Labiau, signed in November 1656. Directly his back was turned, the Great Elector threw off the mask, and offered his friendship and assistance to John Casimir, if only he would follow the

War with Poland, 1656.

Coalition against Sweden.

Treaty of Labiau. Ackowledgment of the independence of East Prussia by Sweden, 1656.

example of Sweden, and release east Prussia from all claims of feudal vassalage. As long as he obtained his independence, Frederick William did not trouble about the honesty of the transaction. John Casimir accepted the terms. By the treaty of Wehlau, concluded in September 1657, the Great Elector cynically reversed the treaty of Labiau, made only ten months before, became the ally of Poland and the enemy of Sweden, and received as the reward of his dissimulation, the recognition of the independence of east Prussia by his legitimate suzerain.

Treaty of Wehlau. Acknowledgment of the independence of East Prussia by Poland, 1657.

The anger of Charles X. when he heard of it knew no bounds. Thirsting for revenge he nerved himself to attempt the feats of a hero. In the depth of the winter of 1657-58, he suddenly marched his army of 20,000 men across the ice of the Belts upon Denmark, and captured the islands of Fünen and Zealand on his way without ships, crossing it is said some runlets of open water by bridges. Denmark, paralysed with astonishment hastened to make peace, and Charles directed his army upon east Prussia. But fortunately for the Great Elector, Europe had become tired of incessant war; and the great states, especially the maritime powers of England and Holland, had no wish to see their trade interfered with by the conquests of a new Alexander of the north. They interfered to impose negotiations for peace upon the combatants. The death of Charles X. in February 1660 made their task the easier, and on May 3rd, 1660, was signed the treaty of Oliva, between Sweden Poland and Brandenburg. In the following month the treaty of Copenhagen restored peace to Sweden and Denmark, and in 1661 the north was finally pacified by the conclusion of the treaty of Kardis between Sweden and Russia.

Attack upon Denmark by Sweden, 1657.

Treaties of Oliva, Copenhagen, and Kardis, 1660-1661.

By these treaties John Casimir of Poland renounced all claims upon the throne of Sweden, and acknowledged the independent sovereignty of Frederick William in east Prussia.

Frederic III. of Denmark surrendered almost all the remaining possessions of Denmark on the Scandinavian peninsula to Sweden, and all other conquests made were restored. Sweden thus attained the geographical unity which she had long desired, and the Great Elector had guaranteed to him by European treaty the independent sovereignty over the duchy of east Prussia which he had risked so much to gain. If the peace of Westphalia marks the first great step in the territorial aggrandisement of Brandenburg, the peace of Oliva marks the first great step towards the dynastic aggrandisement of the elector. Already absolute and sovereign in Brandenburg, he now became sovereign in east Prussia, and only one step remained to be taken, to make the united state of Brandenburg-Prussia the most formidable, because the most centralised power of the north.

Terms of the pacification of north.

CHAPTER IX

LOUIS XIV. AND COLBERT

Alteration of political ideals in the middle of the century—Seventeenth-century kingship—Character of Louis XIV.—His government—The organisation of France under him—The training of Colbert—Nicholas Fouquet—Colbert becomes minister of finance—His financial reforms—The principles of his financial policy—Advantages and dangers of his system—Character of Colbert—The choice before Louis in 1671 between commercial and military supremacy—Preference of military supremacy.

THE eighteen months which followed the peace of the Pyrenees form the turning-point of the seventeenth century. Up to that time the ideas and the policy which sprang from the controversies of the sixteenth century had made themselves felt, albeit but dimly. As long as the battle between the Church and Puritanism was being waged in England, as long as Spain with her uncompromising Catholicism was still in the front rank of European states, as long as Sweden, strong in the traditions of Gustavus Adolphus, was still the first power in the north, it was impossible to say that the interest of religious questions had quite ceased to be the dominant interest in European politics. But the years 1660 and 1661 saw a great change, not so much in the motives and ambitions which really actuated nations, as in the men who were called upon to express them in politics. From the peace of the Pyrenees, Spain retired from the arena of politics into a sleep of decay and decline, and ceased to be of importance in the affairs of Europe, until the ill-omened day when were seen gathering round her carcase the eagles of the world prepared for deadly strife. From the Restoration in May 1660, England wholly

Altered political ideals, 1660.

surrendered any claim to be thought to be guided by moral ideals in her policy at home or abroad, and offered herself to the highest bidder, under the guidance of a king whose sole thought was for his own personal comfort. The peace of Oliva, and the death of Charles x. left Frederick William of Brandenburg the foremost figure in northern Europe, and consecrated by the rewards of success the policy of pure selfishness in its most shameless form. History often has to note how among the contests inspired by religion, liberty and patriotism, there is much of selfish intrigue and personal ambition; how in the most sacred causes the dictates of humanity and of justice are not unfrequently forgotten; and it may well be said, that the spectacle of a Charles II. bartering away his country's honour to gain for himself immunity from trouble, or of a Frederick William cynically breaking faith with the ally of yesterday because he could obtain more from the ally of to-day, is only more repulsive, because less hypocritical, than the ambition of an Elizabeth or a Philip II., which attempted to conceal itself under nobler ideals. But after all, taking men at their worst, which is always the most untrue of estimates, it is something in international politics, where self-interest must necessarily play so large a part, that its working should be concealed as much as possible, even from those who are actuated by it. Moral conventions are necessary where an agreed standard of moral principle is impossible, and bad faith is as reprehensible in diplomacy as the employment of savages is in war. Those who use them may gain the battle, but at the cost of civilisation.

Personal power and territorial aggrandisement, the motives of policy.

The monarchs and statesmen who were succeeding to the responsibilities of government in the middle of the seventeenth century found themselves in a very different position from that which their fathers had inherited. No longer were there great ideals around them to take captive their imaginations and absorb their energies. No longer were there obvious difficulties of home government to conquer or avoid.

There were no struggling nationalities like that of Holland to protect, no overgrown dominating tyranny like that of Spain to oppose, no turbulent territorial baronage to crush, or be crushed by, the Crown. These questions had worked themselves out in the earlier part of the century and had left a blank behind them. A young king, who took up the reins of government after the middle of the century, found an open map before him. His country was much exhausted by war, longing above everything for rest, ready to make any sacrifices for order. The nobles, thinned and impoverished by war, were not in a position to dispute his authority. The army, well organised and obedient, gave him a power over the lives and property of his subjects, wholly unknown to former generations. A highly developed system of diplomacy enabled him to conduct negotiations secretly with all the important states of Europe, while as yet the comity of nations had established no general moral standard to which diplomatists were expected to conform. Under these circumstances it was only natural that the ambition of sovereigns should impel them to try and make their own power supreme at home, and to enlarge the boundaries of their territories abroad. Absolute power and territorial aggrandisement become the main objects of European kings. The nation is identified with the king; the larger and the richer the territory he rules, the greater his glory and circumstance. Before that all things give way. Differences of speech, differences of race, differences of religion, differences of government, count for nothing, and whole peoples are tossed about from one ruler to another like counters at the table of the diplomatists, not in cynicism but in sheer unconcern. Wrapped up in the supreme importance of gaining for their respective masters one district or one town the more, politicians have become wholly oblivious of everything else; until from the sheer necessity of having some principle to which to appeal, they eventually evolved the doctrine of the balance of power, which, when

Unique position of the Crown.

pushed to its logical development in the succeeding century, meant little else than that, if one European state managed to steal something, all the other states had the right of stealing something too. In the nineteenth century, the cause of oppressed nationalities has most powerfully influenced the map of Europe. It is the glory and the boast of the greater powers to have assisted in the unification of Italy, or the liberation of the Christian states of the Balkan Peninsula. At the end of the seventeenth century it was quite otherwise. To establish beyond all question the authority of the crown, to maintain a powerful and perfectly equipped army, to astonish the world by the splendour of the court, to push ever further and further away the frontiers of the nation, to extend a lordly protection, little short of vassalage, to weaker countries,—such were the objects of a patriot king, such the rewards of successful statesmanship. The nation was focussed and crystallised into the person of the king. It worked, fought, lived, conquered for him alone. In his glory it saw its own reflected, it recognised him as its representative and its champion, it surrendered its independence to him ungrudgingly, and in his success it reaped its reward. The rights of peoples were not so much set aside, as not even thought of, for everything was absorbed in the personality of the king.

Louis XIV. the type of seventeenth century kingship.

Of this type of kingship Louis XIV. is always looked upon as the representative if not the founder. Its founder he certainly was not, for his was not the mind to found anything. There is nothing original, no initiative, about Louis XIV. He can use, he cannot produce. The productive power seems wholly wanting in him. He is essentially a barren man, singularly skilful in making use of the material with which he is provided, but unable to add to it. It has often been pointed out how he inherited everything which has made him great, and left nothing great behind him. Condé and Turenne, Lionne and Servien, Colbert, Corneille, and Racine were the products of the age of Richelieu and Mazarin, and

only utilised by Louis, while Villeroy and Tallard and Boileau were the work of his own hands. The statement requires some modification, but the principle which underlies it is true. Nearly everything which was great in France at the time of his accession to power Louis had the ability to use. For the most part what became great in France during his reign was not trained by him, and indeed in the case of Port Royal attained its greatness in spite of him, and what was directly trained by him was not great. The reason is not far to seek. It is the vice of an absolutely centralised monarchy, where the king is all in all, that it cannot in the nature of things tolerate any one greater than the king. The ministers are servants, and no servant can be greater than his master. Even in the Prussian monarchy of to-day there is no room for a Bismarck, still less could one have been permitted to exist at the court of Louis XIV. An absolute monarch sets the standard of his ministers, if he absorbs the whole state into himself as did Louis, and does not merely let things govern themselves as is the fashion among Oriental despots. From the time of the death of Mazarin, Louis determined he would never have another prime minister. He himself, like Napoleon after him, would be the head and motive power of the whole of the governmental and social machinery. He kept his word with singular patience and pertinacity, and working harder probably than any sovereign had worked, since the days of Philip II., never permitted a minister, not even Louvois, to rise above the merest departmental independence. The result was inevitable. A commonplace man himself, without insight, without originality, without independence of mind, he could not inspire genius, and could not tolerate it if he found it. He wanted diligence and accuracy, not genius and statesmanship, clerks not ministers of state, and he got what he wanted. It is significant that in all departments of administration except one, when he had used up the men whom Richelieu

Louis a man of second-rate abilities.

His determination to admit of no rival.

and Mazarin had left to him, he found no others to take their places. In diplomacy alone France remained unrivalled to the end of the century, the one department of which Louis himself was complete master, and in the conduct of which he was thoroughly competent to take the lead.

His great kingly qualities.

But in spite of his deficiencies in the higher qualities of statesmanship, not Aristides better deserved his title of the Just, than did Louis XIV. that of *le Grand Monarque*. It was essentially as a king that Louis was great. No sovereign of modern days has had the kingly gifts in such rich profusion. Dignity without awkwardness, courtesy without familiarity, gallantry without coarseness, a winning manner, ready tact, chivalrous bearing, refined mind, and modest demeanour, made the young king at once the pride of the French court and the boast of the French nation. But something more than this was required to make him the pattern and type of European kingship. It was not merely that his social insight brought instinctively to his lips the word which, within the bounds of good breeding, would prove most pleasing or most effective to those whom he wished to impress, or that his knowledge of character taught him almost intuitively the best mode of approaching those whom he wished to win. It was not only that his elaborate and punctual care for the etiquette and ceremonial of the court could not fail to affect the mind with a sense of the perfection of regal state, and attract it by a polished order of courtly magnificence. Versailles was not the first court in Europe to be distinguished by the splendour of its ceremonial, and the refinement of its manners, but Louis XIV. was the first great sovereign in Europe who made the perfection of his court an essential part of his system of policy. When the Popes had ceased to be the common fathers of Western Christendom, they applied themselves to make the seat of their power the centre of the wider realm of art. Rome deposed from the throne of universal faith was to be recompensed by the sceptre of

His theory of kingship.

universal culture. So when France was assuming the headship of Europe, and was preparing to strike for the dominion of the civilised world, her court was to be the epitome, the representation of the world's greatness. Mirrored there in a tiny but radiant sphere was to be found all which makes humanity noble and life beautiful. Intellect and birth, genius and beauty, culture and statesmanship, art and devotion, all were to be there marshalled in an admirable perfection of order, but shining one and all with a reflected light, illuminated by the rays of the king, their sun. Not unthinkingly did Louis adopt the sun as his type. According to his theory of government he was the centre, the life-giving principle of the system in which he ruled. All that was young and beautiful in France sprang into life at his bidding, and withered into decay when he averted his face, all that was powerful drew its vigour from his favour, while from less privileged lands the kings of the earth, like the Magi of old, drawn by the light of his compelling rays, were to come from the ends of the world to find under his protecting care the pattern of life and the home of faith.

Sarcasm comes easy to the lips when dealing with a theory such as this. Men cannot stop the course of the winds of heaven by building houses of cards, and no artificial arrangements of a court can conceal national weakness or physical decay. The sturdy English pencil of Thackeray has drawn out the hollowness of this theory of seventeenth century kingship in the bitter sarcasm of the well-known sketches of *Louis le Roi* in his later years. In the first appears the real *Louis*, insignificant, decrepit, bald, and old, shaking and feeble with age, a living corpse rather than a man. Opposite to him stands *le Roi*—the flowing peruke curled and oiled, the royal robes bedecked with ribbons, flashing with jewels, the tailor-made divinity that doth hedge a king, standing ready for the monarch's use on its skeleton frame. Lastly we see the human atom and its gorgeous artificial covering united in *Louis le Roi*, and are

Truth of Thackeray's caricature.

bidden to reflect how much of the *Grand Monarque* is the work of the tailor and the wigmaker, and how little of God. The argument is true, the sarcasm is just. Where the splendour of a court is part of the system of government, represents and enforces the national dignity, sets the fashion to foreign ambition, is the living embodiment of the power and genius of the state, king and courtiers must not grow old. Queen Elizabeth, encouraging protestations of love at the age of seventy, and Louis XIV. attempting artificially to conceal the advance of years, are spectacles offensive because unnaturally theatrical. But their loathsomeness never struck contemporaries as it does us. Louis XIV. never lost the respect of Europe or the love of his subjects. His kingliness was a fact which had so impressed itself upon Europe, as both the cause and effect of the greatness of France and the success of his policy, that men became insensible to the physical incongruity. And they were right. From the court of Louis flowed out influences far more potent than those which followed the feet of his soldiers or the coaches of his diplomatists. Versailles set the fashion to the civilised world. French manners, French dress, French speech, French art, French literature, French preaching, French science became the property and the models of civilised Europe. For a hundred years in every department of life, from the turning of a couplet to the drilling of recruits, from the composition of a panegyric to the design of a card-table, everything is ruled by the French instinct of order, cramped by the French love of artificial completeness, refined by the French genius for finish, illuminated by the justness of French taste. There are few kings to whom it has been given to dictate to civilisation for a century the principles by which she is to live.

The French court at the head of civilisation.

The secret of the wonderful success of Louis XIV. in all those departments of life and of government which he understood lay in the close personal attention which he gave to the matter in hand. His genius certainly lay in his infinite

capacity for taking trouble. Even in his earlier years, when his court was the gayest in Europe, not only would he listen to all the despatches of his ambassadors and personally dictate the answers, but he actually kept up a private correspondence with the more favoured of the envoys on matters of which he did not wish the foreign office to have cognisance. Of important negotiations, especially those in connection with the great treaties of his reign, he took entire management himself, and frequently wrote his directions to his representatives with his own hand. He was equally punctilious about the smaller questions of etiquette which occupied so much of the time and thought of ambassadors in the seventeenth century. The order of an ambassador's entry, the rules by which he is to be guided in the decisive matters of covering and uncovering, giving or denying the '*pas*,' the supreme necessity of trying to get in front of the Spanish ambassador, if it could possibly be managed, are all laid down and commented upon by Louis with the utmost sense of their importance. Nothing was too great, nothing too small, for his personal care. The negotiations for a partition treaty, the arrangements for a fête at Marli, the design for the fortifications of Lille, the rebuke to be administered to a malapert courtier or a forgetful servant were alike the subject of careful consideration. 'I have almost been obliged to wait' is a phrase which has become proverbial.

Louis's attention to business.

This minute attention to detail on the part of the Crown in a nation gifted like the French with a genius for completeness produced a corresponding thoroughness of treatment in every branch of the administration. Organisation was the order of the day. During the years of Louis's greatness, before the constant strain of the over-ambitious wars had broken everything down, organisation is the note of his government. The great ministers are organisers not statesmen. They are at the very antipodes of genius to Richelieu. And they are organisers, not in the sense in

Organisation the characteristic of his government.

which Sully was an organiser, merely the rooter-out of patent abuses, but in the far higher sense in which Charles Montague was an organiser, one who laid down true principles of administration and constructed the machinery necessary for carrying them out. Lionne organised the French foreign office and diplomatic service, Colbert the internal administration of France, Louvois the war office, on principles which became the acknowledged principles of foreign, home, and military administration among all countries for more than a century, some of which will remain acknowledged principles for all time. It was this which enabled France to take full advantage of her centralisation, which enabled her to bear the extraordinary strain of unsuccessful war in the way she did, which gave her such advantages in dealing with a huge unorganised mass like the Empire, which left her even after all her losses at the end of the reign of Louis XIV. stronger than she had been at the beginning. To the ministers who planned and carried it out belong justly the honours of the achievement, but it would never have been carried out at all had it not been for the master who inspired them.

Training of Colbert in the household of Mazarin.

Colbert had served his apprenticeship in the household of Mazarin. Early in life the cardinal had noticed his singular capacity for business, and had taken him into his service from that of Le Tellier, and intrusted him with the care of his household. The suggestions which Colbert made from time to time to his master about the conduct of his business soon showed Mazarin that he had in his new servant not merely an accurate clerk, but a financial organiser, and gradually he placed in his hands the whole management of his private affairs. The cardinal was at once frugal and extravagant, avaricious and luxurious, and it was the duty of Colbert to buy the best of everything in the cheapest market, and to surround his master with comforts, while he doubled and trebled his fortune. It was no easy task, for the cardinal was very particular. Shirts for Mazarin's own use, the trousseaux of his nieces, carpets for his palace,

his wedding gift to the young queen, all had to receive Colbert's personal attention; while he was more particularly responsible for the investments and commercial undertakings by means of which the cardinal amassed his huge fortune. Colbert was thoroughly fitted for the work he had to do. Gifted with a keen eye for business, great shrewdness in his estimate of men, and unlimited patience in his attention to details, unhampered by scruples, stimulated but not led away by ambition, he unhesitatingly set himself to satisfy his master's avarice. He used the powers of the state to give the cardinal's merchandise priority in the markets, and to relieve it from the overwhelming burden of the dues which pressed so hardly upon all other merchants. Under his guidance the state itself as it were went into business for the benefit of the prime minister, with the result that only seven years after the end of the *Fronde* the cardinal died worth £2,000,000 of money, and bequeathed on his deathbed the architect of his fortune to the young king and to France as his most precious possession.

When Mazarin died the finances of the country were under the control of Nicholas Fouquet, the brother of the Abbé Fouquet, who had for some years been the head of Mazarin's secret police. Nicholas Fouquet was a man of great ability and vaulting ambition. Seeing corruption all around him he quickly yielded to the prevailing vice, and used his double position of Superintendant of the Finances and Procureur-General to collect a large fortune. But unlike Mazarin there was no stain of avarice about Fouquet. He was the prey of large schemes of ambition, the dispenser of a magnificence more than royal. By a lavish use of his ill-gotten wealth he became the owner of colonial settlements, the patron of art and literature, the builder of the most magnificent palace in France, the centre and head of a social côterie which might at any moment become a political danger. But if Fouquet had many friends at court he had many enemies in the country. His splendour and success made men jealous of him, his reckless mismanagement made

Nicholas Fouquet.

the business class distrust him, the increase of the debt made all the *bourgeois* hate him, his unblushing corruption gave his enemies the whip-hand over him, and when it was known that the king would not support him a cabal was formed with Colbert at its head to ruin him. There was no difficulty in proving charges of peculation and mismanagement, the question was entirely whether his faction at court was strong enough to save him. The ladies were on his side, but the king, either because he was jealous of his political power and thought him dangerous to the Crown, or because he was jealous of his personal influence with Mdlle. de la Vallière, who at that moment exercised unlimited sway over Louis's susceptible heart, determined on his destruction. He was induced to sell his office of Procureur-General, which carried with it the privilege of being tried only by the Parlement, and then was suddenly arrested only a few days after he had entertained Louis and his court with regal magnificence at his sumptuous palace of Vaux. A special commission was formed in order to try him. For three years the tedious trial spun out its weary length. At last he was found guilty of crime against the state and banished. Louis's jealousy and Colbert's hate were not to be appeased so easily. By a stretch of royal power almost unprecedented Louis substituted a sentence of perpetual imprisonment for that of banishment, and men have darkly whispered since, that even that severe punishment did not exhaust the royal vengeance, and that the Iron Mask so well known to French romance concealed the features of the brilliant Superintendant of Finance who had dared to raise his eyes to the mistress of the king!

Condemnation of Fouquet, 1661.

The disgrace of Nicholas Fouquet placed the whole internal administration of France in the hands of Colbert, and he entered at once with zeal on the business of its reorganisation. The finances demanded his first attention. Under the mismanagement of Richelieu Mazarin and Fouquet all the evils which Sully had suppressed had again reappeared. The tax-gatherers and the financiers made

Colbert appointed to succeed him.

large fortunes, while the treasury received but a small percentage of the vast sums wrung from the people. The expenses of the state were defrayed from day to day by the sale of offices, by the creation of offices for the purpose of sale, and by loans raised at ruinous interest. There was no check upon peculation, no system of accounts, no thought of economy. France, like a happy-go-lucky spendthrift in the hands of the Jews, was drifting aimlessly into bankruptcy without even having money at command. Colbert determined on severe measures. His experience in Mazarin's household had taught him how fortunes are made, and what sort of consideration was due to those who became rich by lending money to the state. At one stroke he repudiated the worst of the loans raised by Fouquet, and diminished the interest payable on those which he acknowledged. Having thus reduced the burden of the debt to reasonable proportions he proceeded to deal with the collection of the taxes. He remitted the long-standing arrears of *taille*, forced the tax-gatherers to render accounts, took proceedings against the worst of the peculators, and made them disgorge their stolen gains. Order was restored in the administration as if by magic. Every penny of expense was carefully considered, duly authorised, and properly accounted for. Intendants were again appointed to superintend the farmers of revenue, the *taille* was reassessed, the claims for exemption inquired into, the receipt-books duly audited and checked. By these means he procured sufficient money to pay the interest on the debt, and the expenses of the government without increasing the taxes. In 1662, only a year after he became Controller General, he was able to show a surplus of 45,000,000 of francs without having increased the financial burdens on a single honest man.

Financial mismanagement.

Remedial measures of Colbert.

But Colbert was not content with merely restoring order in the financial administration. It was not sufficient in his eyes merely to take care that the receipts should exceed the expenditure, and that opportunities for peculation should be reduced to

a minimum. He was one of the first of ministers to realise how intimately the greatness and prosperity of a nation are bound up with a good financial system, to trace the wonderful effect in developing the national wealth and promoting the national happiness, produced by a system of taxation which carefully adjusts the financial burden to the shoulders of those best able to bear it. Ministers of finance before Colbert's time had looked upon taxation solely from the point of view of the government, had taxed those things upon which it was most easy to levy taxes, and had levied the taxes in the way which ensured to the government a certain income with very little trouble, quite regardless of the effect of the system upon the tax-payer. Colbert on the contrary saw that the secret of a good revenue lay not in the ease with which the tax was collected, but in the ease with which it was paid. The interest of the government and of the tax-payer were identical not antagonistic, and the more the government could consult the convenience of the tax-payer, the more the tax-payer would be able to afford for the convenience of government. A good finance minister therefore would not content himself with restoring order in the collection of taxes, and economy in the disbursements of the treasury, but must apply himself to far greater and more difficult problems, must study how to increase the resources of the country to their utmost capacity, and how to adjust the necessary taxation so as to interfere as little as possible with their development.

Principles of his financial policy.

In the answer to these two questions lies the whole secret of scientific finance. Colbert was the first finance minister to attempt to give a scientific answer to them, that is, an answer based upon reasoned principle. The reasoned principles adopted by Colbert have been in the main the principles acted upon by most civilised countries from this day to our own. They are principles which underlie the economical system known as Protection, and are the application of the theory of national sovereignty to

Character of his protective system.

economical subjects. The seventeenth century, as we have seen, was essentially governed in all political thought by the theory of the solidarity of nations under their kings. All Europe was coalescing into territorial entities under their respective sovereigns. Every such territorial entity guarded itself off from its neighbours by the acquisition of natural frontiers, and by the equipment of a professional army, and emphasised its individuality by its concentration under its king and by the representation of its king and his interests diplomatically at other courts. The idea of a Europe united through the Christian brotherhood of man had passed away. The idea of a Europe united through the cosmopolitan brotherhood of man had not yet come. Between those two theories of brotherhood, men were content to relapse practically into a condition of enmity, and were engaged in building barriers against their neighbours, in developing their own strength as much as possible, and in preventing their neighbours from developing theirs. The same principles governed men's conduct in economics as in politics. Economic independence was considered just as important for a nation as political independence. To be as strong and resourceful as possible within the territorial limits of the kingdom, to be as independent as possible outside those limits were the recognised objects of every statesman. In the eyes of Colbert it was just as necessary for France that she should not depend upon the foreigner for her bread, as that she should not owe him allegiance for her land. He would have thought it as reckless a piece of criminal folly to derive the food-supply of the nation from certain rivals and possible enemies, as to intrust to them the defence of the frontier.

Following out these principles Colbert set before himself two great objects, to promote within the limits of France itself the production of wealth by all the means in the power of the government, and to prevent the foreigner by the imposition of hostile tariffs from underselling the home producer in any of the commodities

Encouragement of home trade and manufactures.

necessary to the national well-being. He endeavoured to abolish the provincial customs and local dues which impeded the free circulation of trade from French province to province, and actually succeeded in abolishing them over three-fourths of the country, in spite of the most strenuous local opposition. He improved roads and developed the canals which had been begun by Sully into a great system of water communication. Of this system the celebrated canal of Languedoc, between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, which has done so much to promote the prosperity of France, was the most striking example. For more than a century it remained without a rival. When at last other nations began to realise the importance of quick and easy communication, French roads and canals became the models upon which they worked, French engineering talent the authority to which they appealed, and the Suez Canal in the present day derives its ancestry from the canal of Languedoc and the genius of Colbert. He encouraged manufactures of all sorts. Under his care French lace, glass, tapestries, silks, and brocades, became the most celebrated in the world. He introduced a more scientific system of dealing with the state forests, promoted large breeding establishments for horses, encouraged the formation of industrial and commercial companies, assisted the founding of colonies, and protected the infant colonial trade by the formation of an efficient navy. At the same time he relieved the peasantry from the heaviest of the fiscal burdens which oppressed them by reducing the *taille* nearly a half, and recouping the treasury by imposing indirect taxes, principally upon articles of luxury which were paid by the consumer. He helped the manufacturer by removing the export duties on articles manufactured at home, while he imposed heavy import duties on similar articles imported from abroad. There was, however, one serious exception to this policy. So fearful was he lest France should ever become dependent on other nations for her bread, that he absolutely refused to allow corn to be exported under any circumstances. The surplus corn produced by the rich

Prohibition of corn exportation.

corn fields of France over and above the wants of the nation would if freely exported have formed one of the most lucrative sources of the national wealth, for France in the seventeenth century was the corn-growing country of Europe, but Colbert deliberately deprived himself of this source of revenue, and kept the French agriculturist poor, in order to make food cheap and ensure a large surplus of corn in the country.

The result of this policy, taken as a whole, was undoubtedly most beneficial to France, in spite of the exaggeration of Colbert's protective measures. In the ten years, from 1661-71, during which time Colbert had a real control over the national finances, with the exception of the court expenses, not only was the debt largely reduced, peculation checked, and the taxation greatly lightened and better distributed, but new and fertilising streams of prosperity were tapped in the establishment of manufactures and the opening of means of communication which no misgovernment could again wholly close. By the year 1671, France had gained for herself under Louis XIV., through the abilities of Colbert, a position to which history does not afford any exact parallel. United and concentrated far more thoroughly than any other country, with the whole forces of the nation absolutely at the control of the king, defended on all sides except one by a clearly defined and well-fortified frontier, rich by the fertility of her soil and the industry and frugality of her people, she was now adding riches to riches by the establishment of manufactures and the promotion of commercial enterprise. Her colonies were springing up in every part of the globe, her navy was formidable enough to defend them from attack, her army second to none in discipline and reputation. Her people were prosperous, contented and obedient; her administrators just, careful and honest; her system of administration pure, and based upon principles which made the security and independence of the country the first consideration.

Condition of France after ten years of Colbert's government, 1671.

On the other hand it did not require much foresight to see

that a system of scientific finance which was based purely upon selfish principles could not fail to lead to international complications. If every nation of Europe were to construct for its own advantage a hostile system of tariffs against other nations, excuses for war would be endlessly multiplied. However self-sufficient a country may be there must be many articles of convenience, if not of necessity, for which it depends upon its neighbours. Let a nation increase its colonial empire as much as possible, and keep its trade wholly to itself by an elaborate code of navigation laws, even then international trade will not die nor foreign smuggling be stopped. Protective duties and prohibitive legislation have never yet succeeded in destroying the commercial dependence of one civilised nation upon another. Nations which wish to protect their own trade by tariffs can only do so by constructing a system which shall be injurious to that of their neighbours, and is sure to lead to smuggling and reprisals. In the sixteenth century trade adventurers looked after themselves, and it was rare for the home government to consider itself compromised by high-handed acts of piracy committed by its subjects on the other side of the world. But when it was the action of governments themselves which led to collisions between their subjects, they were bound in honour to defend their own system. Tariff reprisals were instituted, and claims made of a right to punish foreign smugglers, and search foreign ships for smuggled goods, which were certain before long to lead to war in downright earnest. It has often been said that the wars of the sixteenth century were wars of religion, but those of the eighteenth century wars of tariffs. The Dutch war of 1672 is adduced as the first great war of the latter class, which was the first great war waged in Europe since the adoption of a scientific system of protective duties by a first-class power. There is some exaggeration in this statement, but it is undoubtedly true that, from the date of the adoption of a protective system by France under the guidance of Colbert, there is not an important war waged in

Dangers of the protective system.

Europe for a century and a half in which considerations of tariffs and commerce do not play a large part; and it may well be doubted whether the national organisation of finance any more than the national organisation of defence, though steps along the path of civilisation, have proved movements towards the attainment of peace.

By the time he had completed his first decade of personal rule the administrative talents of his ministers and his own gift for governing had indeed raised Louis to a pinnacle of glory and of reputation far exceeding all other sovereigns of his time. His court was the most splendid and the most polished in Europe. Round it were gathered the genius of Turenne, the brilliance of Condé, the dignity of Corneille, the wit of Molière, the finish of Boileau, the art of Racine. From Italy Bernini brought his solid if too dramatic talent for the embellishment of Paris, while the sweetness of Claude and the breadth of Le Brun were called upon to minister to the greatness of the greatest of European sovereigns. In sharp contrast to all this magnificence and grace stood the minister without whom it could not have existed. Dour, grim, and harsh, Colbert moved through the world without a friend, a man to whom ambition was life, and business pleasure. Scrupulously honest, severely conscientious, strictly just, painfully accurate, sincerely religious, he was wanting in humanity. He was absolutely without heart and without sympathy. A man of religion, he angered the clergy by trying to reduce the number of 'religious' because they did not make wealth; a man of the people, he offended the populace by reducing the number of holidays; a zealous Catholic, he displeased the orthodox by the favour he extended to the Huguenot craftsmen, while he made himself unpopular with the Huguenots because he deserted them in the hour of their need, when the king turned against them. A man of conscientious probity, he had no scruples in directing the judges to convict strong and powerful prisoners who were accused of crime, in order that the king's

Contrast between Louis and Colbert.

galleys might be well manned, and even prevented galley slaves who had served their time from being set free if they were still useful for the king's service. Less and more than human no wonder that men felt instinctively that he was their enemy, however great the blessings of good government which he had conferred upon them, and followed his coffin to the grave with execrations in 1683.

In that, however, they were grossly unjust. They were visiting upon him their dislike of the increased war taxation of which he was the mouthpiece not the author. In the year 1671 France stood at the parting of the ways. On each side stretched far into the future a long vista of glory and prosperity, but she had to choose between them. Through the victories of Richelieu and of Mazarin, through the administration of Colbert, through the government of Louis, France stood at the head of the countries of Europe in absolute security, without a rival who wished to attack her, without an enemy whose attack she might justly fear. Entrenched within the borders of a frontier easily defensible by the genius of a Vauban, she might sit free from all possible danger until the floodgates of European warfare should reopen. Planting her colonies in America, in Africa, in Madagascar, and among the islands of the West, pushing out the operations of her trading companies to India and the Spice Islands of the East, enjoying a pre-eminence through treaty over all other European powers at the court of the Sultan and in the trade of the Levant, on the point of gaining an influence, hitherto unparallelled and undreamed of, over the vast expanse of the empire of China through her Jesuit missionaries, she had but to stretch forth her hand to seize the crown of colonial empire and of commercial supremacy, which was already threatening to fall from the head of the Dutch. In the middle of the seventeenth century she had no rivals to fear. The day of Spain and Portugal was over. Holland, though vigorous, capable and persevering, could not stand out for long against

The choice of policy before Louis, 1671.

Commercial supremacy open to France.

the pressure of her greater neighbours. She had gained her unique and glorious position through their weakness, she could not maintain herself against them in their strength. Already she was stricken to the knees by the English Navigation Act and the war of 1651, and had had to recognise in England an equal in naval power and a rival in commerce. But the day of England had not yet come. In the lucid intervals of a mad and despicable policy, Charles II. did something to encourage the American plantations, and to promote the operations of the East India Company, but it was quite certain that the power of the state would never be thrown into commercial or colonial competition with France, as long as Louis retained in his own hands the means of rendering the king independent of parliamentary control. It is moreover a significant fact that the most important and permanent part of the English colonial empire, which was built up in the eighteenth century, was not the result of colonial enterprise but of war. Canada, the West Indies, the Cape of Good Hope, India itself were the direct fruits of the long wars with France, which in their origin and essence sprang from the military and political ambition of Louis XIV. The rivalry with France, which beginning in 1690 did not end till 1815, which produced during that century and a quarter no less than seven distinct and prolonged contests between the two nations, which gained for England mainly at the expense of France a vast colonial empire, which lost for her her only considerable plantations, was primarily and in its essence a military and European rivalry. The wars were primarily and essentially wars to check the military and political ascendency of France over Europe, and to preserve the balance of power in Europe. They sprang from the policy adopted by Louis XIV. in 1672, when, no longer satisfied with pre-eminence in Europe, he deliberately struck for supremacy over Europe. They followed from the determination of William III. and the Whig party in England to prevent such a consummation at all costs. Had Louis turned his ambition

into other directions, followed where the policy of Colbert pointed the way, thrown the energies of his government and the genius of his people into the path of colonial development and commercial supremacy, pushed his fleets and his armies along the savage tracks where the cupidity of his traders and the self-sacrifice of his missionaries had first marked the road, he would have had nothing to fear from the impotent stubbornness of the Dutch, or the venal indolence of England. And if a century or half a century later England had awoke from her trance and put forth her claims to dominion, a very different task would have awaited her. She would have found an established organised power to conquer, not a rival to outdo.

But it was not to be. The traditions of France lay in the direction of military conquest not of commercial supremacy.

Preference of military supremacy by Louis.

With an army carefully trained and organised by Louvois, with generals at his command like Turenne, Condé and Vauban, with all the traditions of the French monarchy behind him, with all the longing for glory within him, which was the very atmosphere he breathed, with his intimate knowledge of European courts to assist him, what wonder is it that Louis determined on the course which seemed to combine the certainty of success with the maximum of glory? There was no nation in Europe that could resist him. A combination of nations was alone to be feared, and what combination could long resist the disintegrating effects of his diplomacy and their own selfishness? What league had ever been a military success? The resources of France seemed inexhaustible, her armies invincible, her genius irresistible. In the distance but not so very far removed from practical politics must come some day the great question of the succession to the crown of Spain. When that question was ripe for solution France must be in a position to solve it. Impelled alike by the foresight of a statesman, the ambition of a king, and the flattery of a court, Louis took the fatal step and plunged his country into a century and a half of incessant war. With singular ease he had made himself master of France, he now determined to be master of Europe too.

CHAPTER X

LOUIS XIV. AND THE UNITED PROVINCES

Humiliation of Spain and the Pope—Purchase of Dunkirk—The war of devolution—Alarm of Europe—Opposition of the Dutch—The Triple Alliance—The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle—Overthrow of the Triple Alliance—Origin of the United Provinces—Their constitution—Supremacy of the burghers—Unique position of Holland—The House of Orange—Prosperity of the Dutch—Rivalry between the republicans and the House of Orange—John Olden Barneveldt—Attempted revolution of William II.—Supremacy of the republican party—Character and policy of John de Witt—War with England—The Act of Navigation—The Act of Exclusion—Second war with England—The treaty of Breda—Danger from France—The perpetual edict—Popular movement in favour of William III.—Murder of de Witt.

No sooner had Louis XIV. taken the management of affairs into his own hands, than he began to let foreign countries understand that France was now ruled by a sovereign who intended his will to be law, and was not likely to abate one jot of the dignity which he thought due to his crown. In the autumn of 1661, on the occasion of the solemn entry of a Swedish envoy into London, the ambassadors of France and Spain in their eagerness to gain precedence of each other came to blows in the narrow streets. The carriage of d'Estrades, the French ambassador, was overturned, his horse killed, and his suite forced to take refuge in the adjacent houses wounded and beaten; while the victorious Spaniard proudly took his place in the procession clothed with all the insolent dignity of success. Louis took the matter up fiercely, dismissed d'Estrades for having been beaten, recalled his own ambassador from Madrid, and demanded and actually obtained

Humiliation of Spain by Louis, 1661.

from Philip IV., under threat of war, the acknowledgment of the right of the crown of France to precede that of Spain.

A few months later a tumult of a less honourable character brought Louis into sharp antagonism to the Pope. The French ambassador at Rome, the duc de Créqui, had made himself very unpopular by his intolerable pride, and some of the Corsican guards of the Vatican, urged on it is said by the brother of the Pope, and smarting under the wrong of a personal insult rendered to their body by some of the French suite, made themselves the organs of the general hatred and of private revenge, by a gross attack upon the ambassador's wife as she was returning to her palace. A page was killed, many of the servants wounded, and the duc de Créqui, leaving Rome in real or assumed fear for his own life, demanded from Alexander VII. a reparation which the Pope seemed very unwilling to give. Louis immediately seized Avignon, assembled an army, appointed the maréchal du Plessis-Praslin to the command, and ordered him to form the siege of Rome and force the Pope to do justice to the outraged majesty of France. Alexander was astonished at this unexpected display of energy, and sent his nephew the cardinal Chigi in all haste to Paris to offer an humble apology and obtain the best terms he could. He was the first legate say the French historians ever sent by a Pope to ask for pardon. If so, the success of the experiment hardly warranted its repetition. Louis remained for some time obstinately irate, and was only pacified by imposing upon the Pope the public humiliation of banishing his brother, disbanding his Corsican guard, and erecting a pyramid in Rome as a perpetual memorial of his disgrace.

Humiliation of the Pope by Louis, 1662.

More substantial additions to the power of Louis than the precedence of an ambassador or the disgrace of a Pope soon followed. In 1662 he purchased the port of Dunkirk from England, and made it a harbour for warships. In 1663 he sent the count of Schomberg, supported by French officers and French money,

Purchase of Dunkirk, 1662.

secretly to the assistance of Portugal in her war against Spain, and contributed materially to the gaining of the victory of Villa Viciosa in 1665, which established the independence of the country. At the same time he proceeded to read the Grand Vizier a lesson by breaking the ancient league of friendship between France and the Sultan, in consequence of an insult offered to the French ambassador in 1661, sent French troops to assist in the defence of Candia, which was then being besieged by the Turks, and supplied the Emperor with a large sum of money and a contingent of 6000 Frenchmen under La Feuillade and Coligny to resist the incursion of the Ottoman armies into Hungary and Croatia in 1664. Chiefly owing to the irresistible valour of the French troops, the imperial general, Montecuculli, was enabled to inflict a crushing defeat upon the grand vizier himself at the battle of S. Gothard on the Raab, and hurl the invaders back behind their own frontiers.

Assistance given by Louis to Portugal, and against the Turks, 1663-64.

In 1667 broke out the first of the great wars of Louis XIV., the war of devolution. In September 1665 Philip IV. of Spain died, leaving two daughters by his first marriage, of whom the queen of France was the elder, and one son by his second marriage, who succeeded to the crown of Spain under the name of Charles II. Louis immediately laid claim to the Spanish Netherlands in virtue of what was known as the law of devolution. This law was in fact a local custom of the province of Brabant, by which private property in land passed to the female children of the first marriage in preference to the male children of the second marriage. If, therefore, Philip IV. had in his private capacity bought a farm in Brabant, Louis would by the law of devolution have become entitled to it in right of his wife; but to assert that the sovereignty of the Low Countries followed the rule of land tenure in Brabant was one of the most monstrous claims ever put forward by hypocritical ambition. Nevertheless Louis played his part well. The rights of his queen were dwelt upon with much argumentative force by

The War of Devolution, 1667.

writers and diplomatists, while Turenne at the head of 35,000 men produced more convincing arguments. By August 1667 Charleroi Tournay and Lille were in his hands, and the whole of the Spanish Netherlands lay open before him. Astonished Europe awoke to see the once formidable power of Spain falling to pieces before its eyes, to find itself threatened by the overweening ambition of a prince, whose will was law from the Rhine to the ocean, and from the Scheldt to the Pyrenees.

Alarm of Europe.

It was the first time that European statesmen realised the true nature of the danger from France, the first time they understood the real bent of French policy. Hitherto the shade of Philip II. had pressed upon Europe like a nightmare. Hardly ten years had elapsed since Cromwell had declared war against Spain in the spirit of Sir Walter Raleigh, had actually allied himself with France, had called in the aid of the lion to make sure work of the dying elephant. But five years ago Clarendon had made over Dunkirk to Louis, never dreaming that France, and not Spain, was to be the commercial and naval rival of England in the years which were close at hand. The war of devolution shattered these illusions somewhat rudely. It was a war of pure ambition, of undisguised rapacity. It disclosed Louis to the world as absolutely unscrupulous and alarmingly strong. If Spain thus crumbled to dust at his feet, what power in Europe could dare to withstand him? Suddenly, from out the calm which had pervaded all Europe since the treaties of 1660, there loomed in terrific proportions the black shadow of the old world-wide tyranny, which, so far from having been crushed to death in the wars of religion, had merely shifted the centre of its power from Madrid to Paris.

Opposition of the Dutch to Louis's schemes.

The burden of organising the opposition to France fell naturally upon the Dutch. If the French once became masters of Antwerp and the Scheldt, the pre-eminence of Amsterdam, and the prosperity, if not the independence, of the United Provinces was gone. The Spanish Netherlands formed a barrier to the

advances of France which was absolutely necessary to the existence of the Dutch as a nation. It had always been an important part of their settled policy ever since they had gained their independence to keep the French frontier away from the Scheldt. De Witt, the grand pensionary of Holland, who was at that time the political chief of the republic, was fully alive to the danger. Before Louis had crossed the frontier he was deep in negotiations with the Emperor and the princes of Germany, as well as with Sweden and England, to put limits to the aggression of the French. But Louis's diplomacy had been too much for him. By the bribe of a partition treaty for dividing the Spanish dominions between France and the Empire on the death of the weakly king of Spain, Leopold was persuaded to remain neutral while Louis was eating up his leaf of the artichoke. The German princes were secured at heavy cost in October 1667 and Sweden was terrified into inaction by threats. England alone remained dangerous. The fall of Clarendon in November 1667 had put the chief direction of foreign affairs into the hands of Arlington who was in favour of a Dutch alliance. Sir William Temple, the ablest of English diplomatists and a sturdy friend to the Dutch, was sent as English envoy to the Hague. Charles himself, though he never intended to break with Louis and lose the French subsidies, was not averse to an occasional display of independence. With an impartiality more creditable to his cleverness than his honesty, he kept on foot negotiations for an alliance with Spain France and the Dutch at the same time, waiting to see which side would offer him most. By December 1667, however, it became abundantly clear that the English people would not tolerate an alliance with France, or permit Louis to make himself master of the Low Countries. Charles accordingly took the line of the least resistance, authorised Temple to conclude a treaty with the Dutch, and wrote to Louis to explain that he had been obliged to act against his own wishes.

Negotiations with England.

The treaty was signed at the Hague on the 13th of January 1668, and on May 15th Sweden, angered by the threats of Louis, joined the alliance in order to secure the payment of some old-standing claims upon Spain which were guaranteed by the English and Dutch governments. The Triple Alliance, as the treaty was then called, bound the allies to help each other if attacked, and to endeavour to restore peace between France and Spain, on the terms of the surrender to Louis, either of the districts in the Low Countries which he had conquered, or of Franche-Comté and a few specified frontier towns in the Netherlands. By a secret clause they further bound themselves to compel peace on these terms, and, if France refused, they agreed to make war upon her until she was reduced to the boundaries fixed by the treaty of the Pyrenees.

Formation of the Triple Alliance, 1668.

This was the first serious rebuff which the diplomacy of Louis had sustained. His minister at the Hague, d'Estrades, had assured him again and again that he need not be under any apprehensions of the formation of a confederation contrary to his interests under the leadership of the Dutch, because by the constitution of the United Provinces every treaty required the sanction of the estates of the different provinces, and it would be quite easy to ensure its publication, and bring about its defeat, when it was proposed for their acceptance. He overlooked the fact that during the war with England the provincial estates, in order to prevent unnecessary delays, had delegated their powers to a small commission of eight members, and had never resumed them. So while d'Estrades was awaiting in confidence the publication of the full text of the proposed treaty before the provincial estates, de Witt quietly procured the consent of the commission of delegates, and the treaty was signed and ratified before the French knew that it had been even discussed. Louis only heard of the secret article from Charles II. himself. He at once saw the gravity of the crisis, and determined to put himself in the best possible position

Louis outwitted.

for subsequent action. Though it was the middle of winter Condé received orders to advance into Franche-Comté at the head of 15,000 men. On the 1st of February his soldiers crossed the frontier. In a fortnight the whole country was at his feet, and Louis went in person to Besançon to receive its submission. *Beati possidentes* is a diplomatic truth which was just as thoroughly understood by Louis XIV. as by Napoleon.

But unlike Napoleon, Louis knew when he had gone far enough. He was not going to stake everything on the chance of success in a war against a combination of European powers, which was certain to grow larger as time went on. He had already a securer foundation on which ultimately to raise the edifice of French domination over the Spanish Netherlands in his secret partition treaty with the Emperor. The terms of the Triple Alliance guaranteed to him the possession of Lille, Tournai, and Charleroi, the three fortresses which would make France impregnable on her north-eastern frontier and open to her the gate of the Netherlands. The show of moderation at this juncture would do much to disarm the suspicion of Europe, would give him time to mature his plans for the future, and enable him to make very substantial additions to his power in the present. So Louis declared himself willing to negotiate for peace, and on May 29th, 1668, the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed between France and Spain. By it France gave back Franche Comté, having dismantled the fortresses, and received Charleroi, Binch, Ath, Douai, Tournai, Oudenarde, Lille, Armentiéres, Courtrai, Bergues and Furnes, with their districts. Some of these towns, such as Courtrai, Oudenarde and Ath lay within the Netherlands, but in the line of fortresses which stretched, roughly speaking, along the frontier from Dunkirk to Charleroi, and included Lille, France had now an adequate defence for her capital. Paris was safe and the invasions of the years of the *Fronde* could never again recur.

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1668.

The war of devolution added to the ambition of Louis XIV. the passion of revenge. It ministered to his pride by showing

him the immense superiority of his armies, and the predominance almost unchallenged of his diplomacy. No soldier had been found to face his troops in the field, no fortress had dared to resist his attack, the success of his diplomacy had even broken the traditional alliance between the Emperor and Spain. Germany had remained unconcerned while Spain was being devoured. There was but one blot on this fair picture. One power had dared to enter the lists with the all-powerful Louis and had given him a fall. The Dutch had been the heart and soul of the Triple Alliance. Without them it would never have been called into existence. The assistance of England and Sweden was merely fortuitous. It was the Dutch who were organising a policy and laying down principles of action. It was galling enough to think that they had ventured to break away from their condition of humble tutelage. To the Huguenots of France and to Henry IV. the Dutch owed their very existence, so every Frenchman believed. That they should be permitted to thwart the cherished schemes of the king of France unpunished, to show to Europe the way by which it could successfully resist French ambition, and yet go scot-free, was impossible. From the day of the signing of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Louis set himself to prepare a deadly punishment for the insolent republicans who had dared to thwart his will. Europe should learn by a terrible object-lesson that the vengeance of the king of France was as swift as his spirit was magnanimous.

Hatred of Louis for the Dutch.

This determination to punish the Dutch meant for France and for Louis the deliberate adoption of a policy which had for its object supremacy over Europe. After the success of the Triple Alliance Louis could not conceal from himself the probability that an attack upon the Protestant maritime and republican power of the United Provinces would almost certainly lead to a coalition of European powers against him. Germany would never stand aside to permit the destruction of the

An additional incentive to the claim of European supremacy.

Dutch. It was more than doubtful if the careless Charles would have the inclination or the firmness to keep England neutral. Every hour that Charles of Spain lived diminished the value of the partition treaty as a bribe to the Emperor. Louis could only wipe the United Provinces from out the map of Europe by making himself the master of Europe. For four years he hesitated before striking the final blow. But everything led him in that direction. In his own court, besides the fulsome atmosphere of adulation in which he lived, which must have weakened his judgment, many influences were urging him on. Lionne, the cautious and trusted minister of foreign affairs, was dead. Louvois, the indefatigable minister of war, had raised the army to a pitch of perfection hitherto unknown, and was anxious to prove its powers. The very success of Colbert's finance made Louis too easily forget the real limits of the resources upon which he was drawing so lavishly. The nobles, ousted by design from politics, now found their only sphere of activity in the army, and were eager for war and for glory. Abroad diplomatic success contributed its spur to his ambition. The Triple Alliance was already a thing of the past. In May 1670 the secret treaty of Dover bound Charles II. hand and foot to France. In November 1671 the Emperor agreed not to assist the enemies of France. In April 1672 Sweden returned to her old alliance, and undertook to attack the Empire if the Emperor helped the Dutch. Finally the bishop of Münster and most of the smaller princes of Germany promised either assistance or neutrality. The Great Elector alone remained stubbornly aloof. These astonishing results of his diplomacy, added to the ceaseless importunities of his court, fired Louis's ambition and overcame his prudence. Forgetting that promises so easily made can be still more easily revoked, he gave the signal for a war of aggression pure and simple, which brought its appropriate and ultimate reward in the wreck of his ambition and the exhaustion of France.

The Triple Alliance overthrown, 1670-1672.

Europe must have been craven-hearted indeed if it had

stood tamely by, wrapped in the cloak of its own selfishness, to watch the death-throes of the United Provinces.

The United Provinces.

The history of their war of independence was sufficient to stir the emotions of every generous soul, the use which they had made of the liberty which they had won such as to guarantee its continuance in the mind of every prudent statesman. Trained to a rough and hard life by a constant struggle with nature, consecrated to a sturdy individualism of character by the religion of Calvin in its most uncompromising and fatalistic form, the peasants from the marshes of Holland and the fishermen from the sand-banks of Zealand had found in the breath of liberty the elixir of a national life. Under the leadership of the burghers of Amsterdam and Dordrecht, at the initiative of the nobility of Zealand and Guelderland, with the support of the scholars of Leyden, the union of Utrecht, formed in 1579, gave to Europe a new nationality, and planted in the very midst of the great monarchies a confederation of tiny republics. Nothing could have preserved their independence at first except a strange combination of national virtues, natural advantages, and political fortune. Persecution had fanned the flame of patriotism till it burned at a white heat. Under the pressure of a long struggle with a superior power even vices turned into virtues. Slowness and obstinacy became refined into patience and endurance, dulness into obedience, sloth into fidelity. Never did men fight with greater heroism, with more complete self-forgetfulness, than these rude sailors and fishermen who wrested their liberty and their religion at the edge of the sword from the pride of Spain. The physical characteristics of the country aided them. Campaigns were difficult in a land which at any moment might be restored to the sea by the cutting of a dyke. Sieges of towns open to the sea by a power which had no navy were fore-doomed to failure. Political complications aided them also. The opposition of France and the jealousy of England made the task of Spain far more difficult. But neither the sympathy of the

Reasons for the success of the war of independence.

Huguenots, nor the gold of Elizabeth, nor the marshes of Holland, nor the defeat of the Armada, would have availed one jot to save the confederation from ultimate ruin had it not been for the tenacity, the patriotism, and the self-sacrifice of the nation itself. Never since the days of Miltiades and Themistocles did a people better deserve their freedom than did the patient Dutch under their silent prince when the dagger of the assassin laid him low in 1584. They had not long to wait, for although the formal independence of the United Provinces was not acknowledged by Spain until the peace of Westphalia in 1648, they had ceased to be under any fear of subjugation since the death of Philip II. in 1598, and had been able since the beginning of the century to transfer their attention from the preservation of their liberty to the development of their power.

Constitution of the United Provinces.

The confederation formed by the Union of Utrecht in 1579 was an example of a kind of government seldom found in history to be permanent, namely a loose confederation of sovereign states. The confederated states were seven in number, Holland, Friesland, Zealand, Utrecht, Guelderland, Overyssel, and Gröningen, and a Federal Constitution was gradually developed. Each of these independent provinces had its own government vested in its provincial estates and its stadtholder; but the common affairs of the whole confederation were transacted in the estates general, which was a representative body consisting of delegates from the provincial estates. To them appertained the right of appointing the captain general and the admiral general, who were the heads of the military and naval forces of the confederation. With them was associated a council of state in whom the executive was vested. The stadtholder, for the chief provinces usually elected the same stadtholder, in virtue of his office, was a member of the council of state and of the provincial estates as well as of the estates general. He appointed the burgomasters of the towns, and the principal magistrates, and had the right of acting as arbiter in any matters of difference

which arose between the provinces. In theory therefore the constitution of the provinces was that of a confederation of sovereign states, which had intrusted certain functions of government, such as the organisation of defence, to a representative body of delegates and an elective chief magistrate; but had retained to themselves certain others, such as finance and foreign affairs. But in practice the influences which made for unity were very much stronger than the disintegrating forces. The independence of the separate provinces was much more apparent than real, and served rather to increase delay and multiply difficulties than to preserve any real independence of action. This came about from various causes. Owing to the spirit of republicanism engendered by the war of independence, and the secularisation of Church property and the overthrow of the Church system brought about by the Reformation, the two orders of the nobles and of the clergy lost all share in the government. Political power fell completely into the hands of the citizens of the towns, and was exercised through the municipal councils, which were in fact in each town the nominees of a small burgher aristocracy. Each province therefore was in reality, as far as politics were concerned, nothing more than a federation of towns, and the provincial estates but the delegates of the municipal councils. This limitation of all political power to one class, that of the burgher aristocracy, did much to secure a unity of interest among the different provinces. This was still further developed by the unique position of the province of Holland in the confederation. It was so far superior to the other provinces in wealth, in population and in dignity, that in common talk it has given its name to the whole republic. It contained within its borders the great trading towns of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Delft and Dordrecht, Leyden the seat of the university, and the Hague the centre of the government. It alone had the right of being represented at the courts of Paris and Vienna. It paid in taxes

Supremacy of the burgher aristocracy.

Unique position of Holland.

almost as much as all the other provinces put together. From its ports issued year by year the merchant ships which had acquired for the United Provinces the carrying trade of the world, the navy which at the beginning of the century was the undisputed mistress of the ocean, and the bands of hardy colonists who had planted the Dutch flag in every quarter of the globe. The great city of Amsterdam itself, with its banks, its docks, and its thousands of fishermen and artisans, founded, as it was said, on the carcases of herrings, was the centre of the commerce and the opulence of northern Europe. The Venice of the North, alike in her commercial prosperity and her close oligarchical government, she so far dominated over all her colleagues that in the days of her greatness the United Provinces were little less than Amsterdam writ large. Shorn of the province of Holland, the country certainly could not have maintained its independence for a moment.

To the unity of interest thus secured by the ascendency of the burgher aristocracy, and the unquestioned leadership of Holland in all national concerns, the House of Orange added a continuity of government. If the United Provinces owed their prosperity to Holland, they owed their very existence to the House of Orange. Had it not been for the statesmanship of William the Silent they would never have won their independence, had it not been for the generalship of Maurice they would never have maintained it. Had it not been for the patriotism and moderation of both they would have lost their republicanism as soon as they had gained it. But fortunately for the Dutch republic the princes of the House of Orange preferred to exercise most of the powers of limited kingship under the guise of an elective magistracy. The head of the House of Orange combined in his person by elections, which were never questioned for seventy years, the offices of stadtholder of five provinces, of captain general and of admiral general of the republic. For the first and most critical half century in the history of the nation the supreme management of the

Leadership of of the House of Orange.

civil, military and naval affairs of the country were in the hands of one family, not indeed by hereditary right, but by an elective custom which had grown at least strong enough to be described as an hereditary right to election. Under their wise government the prosperity of the United Provinces had grown by leaps and bounds. The destruction of the Armada in 1588 removed from the northern seas all enemies to Dutch trade. France, torn by civil and foreign war, could not man a warship or despatch a merchant fleet. England was a more serious rival, but political friendship kept for a time commercial enmities in check. The world was found large enough for both countries, and while English enterprise tended to flow in the direction of America and the West, the Dutch pursued their conquests in Africa and the East. In the East Indies alone, the famous Spice Islands of romance, the two nations found themselves in acute and deadly rivalry, and for some years a war raged on the other side of the globe between the servants of the two East India companies, which was only taken notice of by the home governments when some serious breach of international rights, such as the massacre of Amboyna, forced them to open their eyes and lazily demand compensation.

Prosperity of the Dutch, 1600-1650.

With the dawn of the seventeenth century everything seemed to be conspiring to promote the prosperity of the country. England became more and more entangled in complications at home, and under a weak and vain king gave less and less assistance to her traders. In the north, Sweden and Denmark, engaged first in war among themselves and then in the Thirty Years' War, easily let the Baltic trade imperceptibly glide into the hands of the Dutch. Neither Germany nor France were in a position to enter the lists with the republic, and the decaying power of the Hansa fell completely before the blast of the great war. The United Provinces, it is true, were forced to take their part in the struggle, but under the cautious and talented Frederick Henry, the younger son of William the

Silent, who had succeeded his brother Maurice in 1625, the Dutch contingent did little more than garrison the duchy of Cleves, and keep the Low Countries quiet. Meanwhile the whole world was open to their enterprise. There was literally not a country to compete with them, even feebly, as the troubles in England thickened. They took part of Brazil from Spain, and founded on the coast of North America the colonies of New Holland and New Jersey, settled in Africa, in Ceylon, and on the mainland of India, planted themselves on the rich island of Java, and finally in 1630 made themselves masters of the Cape of Good Hope. In the first half of the seventeenth century they enjoyed a colonial empire larger than that of Venice in its palmy days. They were undisputed masters of the seas, they had almost the monopoly of the carrying trade of the world.

But in this very prosperity lay the germs of future trouble both abroad and at home. The frog might swell itself even to bursting point but it could not rival the dimensions of the ox. The wonderful maritime success of the Dutch was due largely to the fact that its two great neighbours of England and France, who were better situated geographically for the development of trade, were in the throes of foreign and domestic war. When peace was restored, and men had leisure once more to attend to the affairs of commerce, it was not likely that the hardy sailors of Brittany and Devonshire would long lag behind the fishermen of Zealand or the traders of Amsterdam in the race for wealth. It was not possible that the Dutch however high their courage, however great their skill, however tough their pride, could long compete on equal terms with either monarchy. They could not pretend to do so even if they were united among themselves, but that was not the case. The great increase of wealth and prosperity intensified instead of diminishing their internal jealousies. Ever since the Union of Utrecht there had been two distinct parties in the state, the partisans of the House of Orange and the republicans

Rivalry between the republican party and the House of Orange.

pure and simple, the former representing the political principles of a limited monarchy, the latter those of a burgher oligarchy. In the civil and military authority enjoyed by the princes of the House of Orange, through their quasi-hereditary tenure of the stadtholderate and of the supreme military and naval command, their adherents saw the only guarantee which their country possessed against the dangers of internal discord. They looked upon this concentration of authority in the hands of one family as essential to the solidarity of the state, and valued it all the more because they believed it to be the only effective counterpoise to the overweening pride and political domination of Amsterdam. Their weakness lay in the fact that their adherents were mainly drawn from the classes of the nobles, the clergy and the peasantry, who had very little political power. Only in the province of Zealand, where the House of Orange had large possessions, were the majority of the town councils in their favour. But the very fact of their political weakness as compared with their numerical strength inspired them with a jealousy all the more intense of their more fortunate republican neighbours of the towns. These latter were imbued with the narrowest spirit of burgher exclusiveness. They feared alike the democratic tendencies of the populace and the monarchical instincts of the House of Orange. Within a small circle of capitalist families the functions of government were divided pretty equally. Any member of these privileged families, if his capacities were equal to the charge, had the opportunity of being trained in the public service from his earliest years. He succeeded as naturally to the diplomatic or administrative business of his father or his uncle in the political family party, as he did to the management of the family business or the ownership of the family ships.

During the first few years of the history of the republic, while the issue of the war with Spain was still doubtful, the military necessities of the country forced the House of Orange into prominence, and kept the republican spirit in check.

But as political dangers from outside grew less serious, and the wealth and importance of the citizen traders became by far the most important factors of the national life, the political preponderance of the republican party, who drew their strength from the merchant class, soon threatened to be decisive. The province of Holland, which was republican to a man, assumed an unquestioned lead in the national councils. It alone had the right of appointing a representative at the courts of Paris and Vienna. It alone paid more than half the national taxes. It alone provided nearly the whole of the national fleet. Partly owing to these circumstances, partly to his own abilities, as early as the beginning of the century the Advocate of the province of Holland, John Olden Barneveldt, had insensibly become the foremost statesman of the republic. In theory he was only the spokesman or first minister of the provincial estates of Holland, in fact he was the leader of the republican party and for a few years virtual ruler of the republic. He it was who negotiated with foreign states and determined the national policy. Already then it seemed as if the supreme power in the republic had shifted from the stadtholder and the House of Orange to the representative of the republican merchants of Amsterdam. But Maurice, prince of Orange, the second son of William the Silent, was not going to let power slip out of his hands so easily. Taking advantage of a quarrel between Barneveldt and his staunch ally and protector Henry IV., he very skilfully managed to direct upon him, left thus defenceless, the whole weight of the cruelty and fanaticism of the Calvinistic clergy. By a crime, more atrocious than that of the assassination of his own father, because of the hypocrisy which accompanied it, he brought Barneveldt to the scaffold in 1610 by a sentence of judicial murder.

Growth of the Republican Party.

Olden Barneveldt.

Execution of Barneveldt brought about by Maurice of Nassau, 1610.

The villainy was eminently successful. For forty years the republican party suppressed itself, and the government of the republic remained without question in the hands of the

stadtholders of the House of Orange: Maurice, Frederick Henry, and William II. Indeed, when this halcyon period came to an end, it was the ambition of the stadtholder, not the pride of the republicans, which was at fault. William II. had married a daughter of Charles I. of England, and undeterred by the fate of his father-in-law and the outbreak of the *Fronde* he determined to effect a *coup d'état* and turn the stadtholderate into a monarchy. Just before his death Frederick Henry had negotiated with Spain a treaty at Münster, finally ratified in January 1648, by which Spain and the United Provinces agreed to unite together in defence of the Spanish Netherlands against French aggression, on condition that Spain closed the Scheldt to trading vessels and acknowledged the independence of the republic. A more favourable treaty to the United Provinces cannot be imagined, for by it they obtained a barrier between their own territories and those of France, and secured the trade monopoly of Amsterdam. Yet William II. in his insensate ambition actually agreed to throw all these advantages away, and allow France to seize the Spanish Netherlands, in return for the consent of Mazarin to his projected revolution. Having thus secured the neutrality of France he proceeded to put his scheme into execution. He was sure of the support of the army and of Zealand, and need not fear the opposition of any of the other provinces except Holland. His first business accordingly was to get up a quarrel between the states-general and the provincial estates of Holland about the disbandment of some troops, then, posing as the champion of the states-general, obtained from them authority to take measures for the preservation of the union, and to put pressure upon the estates of Holland. This was sufficient for him. After some negotiation, on the 30th of July 1650 he suddenly arrested six of the leading deputies of Holland, and directed his troops to march during the night upon Amsterdam. The city was saved by the merest accident. The night was dark and

Government of Maurice, Frederick Henry, and William II., 1619-1650.

Attempted coup d'état of William II., 1650.

rainy, the troops lost their way. When day broke they were still outside the town. The alarm was given. Only one magistrate Cornelius Bicker von Swieten happened to be in the city, but it was enough. The gates were closed, the drawbridges raised, the militia called out, and Amsterdam was safe, and with Amsterdam the republic. A *coup d'état* was now impossible. William saw he could only succeed by civil war and he did not dare to give the signal for that. For five months both sides eyed each other suspiciously, but neither dared to move. Suddenly, in November 1650, William was seized with a violent fever, and died in a few days.

Death of William II., 1650.

The tragic death of William II. decided the crisis in favour of the republican party. Some weeks after the death of the stadtholder his wife gave birth to a son, the future William III. of England. It was obviously impossible to appoint an infant in his cradle to the supreme command of the civil and military affairs of the country. It was undesirable to ignore the seriousness of the danger from which the republic had accidentally been saved. The republican party at once seized the opportunity and asserted their superiority. A grand assembly was held at the Hague in January 1651 to decide the constitutional points which had arisen, and it was agreed that the stadtholderate should remain vacant, and the functions of the office devolve upon the provincial estates; while the supreme military and naval command was divided between the estates general and the provincial estates. The real gainers by this arrangement were the provincial estates of Holland. Freed from the rights of the stadtholder political power naturally gravitated to the centre of the wealth and intelligence of the nation. In the provincial estates of Holland it found a body of men thoroughly capable of using it, and a chief admirably adapted to the task of working its delicate machinery. In John de Witt, grand pensionary of Dordrecht, elected grand pensionary of Holland in 1653, the republican party found a champion,

Supremacy of the republican party.

and the United Provinces a minister, second to none in Europe for skill honesty and acumen.

Called at the age of twenty-eight to the post of first minister of Holland, John de Witt brought to his task qualities of mind and character singularly fitted to the part he had to play. In him the virtues of Dutch republicanism shone pre-eminent. Homely and frugal in life, straightforward in policy, patient in temper, dignified in manner, persevering in action, no reverse could daunt his spirit, no success destroy his self-control. To the somewhat phlegmatic temper of the Dutch character de Witt added also the finer qualities of the Latin races. Shrewd foresight, quick inventiveness, ready adaptation of means to the end marked his management of foreign affairs. He was the only diplomatist of Europe whose fertility of resource completely outgeneralled Louis XIV., whose steadfastness of purpose completely baffled the shiftiness of Charles II. Winning persuasiveness of speech adorned with rich eloquence of phrase gave him perfect mastery over the assemblies whom it was his business to lead. But the dominant note in his character and policy was his staunch almost fanatical belief in republican principles. Republicanism to him was the whole of patriotism, and almost half of religion. His own father, Jacob de Witt, had been one of the deputies imprisoned by William II. during his abortive attempt to make himself king. John de Witt never forgot the dull horror of those anxious days, when each hour as it sped seemed to be tolling the knell at once of his father's life and of his country's liberty. From that moment the ambition of the House of Orange seemed to him to be as great a danger to his country as the aggressiveness of France or the rivalry of England. To keep down the national sentiment in favour of the young prince, to resist his hereditary claim to the stadtholderate and the command of the forces, to strengthen the hold of the estates of Holland over the government became the keynotes of his home policy, measures which he considered as essential to

John de Witt.

His opposition to the House of Orange.

the well-being of his country as the maintenance of a barrier between France and the Scheldt.

The infancy of the young prince, and the consequent victory of republican principles in the great assembly of 1651, made the danger from the House of Orange for the time imperceptible. When John de Witt became Grand Pensionary of Holland in 1653, the safety of the republic was threatened not by civil dissension but by foreign conquest. With the restoration of order in England by the defeat of the king in the civil war had naturally come a considerable increase in commercial enterprise, and the Dutch traders became once more sensible of English rivalry and opposition in every part of the globe. To this natural rivalry gradually became added special causes of disagreement. During the interval between the defeat of the king and the reduction of the English possessions in the West Indies by the Parliament, the loyal colonists had preferred to trade with a foreign power whose chief was closely related to their king, rather than with the rebels of their own country who had imprisoned him. Consequently the Dutch had succeeded in withdrawing from English merchants the bulk of their American trade. To settle this matter and some others the Parliament sent to the Hague in May 1649 an envoy, Dr. Dorislaus, who had been one of the late king's judges. While he was at the Hague in the character of ambassador, he was murdered by some of Montrose's men by way of reprisal for the death of Charles I. In extreme anger at this insult St. John was sent in 1651 to demand from the estates general the expulsion of prince Charles and his adherents, and their consent to the union of the two republics under a common government, which should have its seat in England. The estates general naturally refused to surrender on demand the independence which they had fought so hard to win, and in August 1651 the English Parliament passed the Act of Navigation which was in reality the signal for war. By this famous act the policy was

Quarrel between the United Provinces and England.

The Act of Navigation, 1651.

first enunciated which was to govern the relations of the great maritime powers to their colonies for a century and a half, the policy namely which regarded colonies as the mere feeders of the mother country. It enacted that foreign ships might only import into England the products of the countries to which they belonged. It was directed obviously against the Dutch, who were at that time the great carriers of the world, and was intended not only to destroy the trade of the Dutch with the English colonies, but also to enable the English ships to wrest the bulk of the carrying trade from their hands.

War with England, 1651-1654.

War at once broke out, in which the genius of Blake and the superior guns of the English fleets triumphed over the tenacity of Tromp and the valour of Opdam. The Dutch merchant shipping was shut up behind the Texel. The English remained masters of the sea. Even the Portuguese dared to seize Brazil, while at home the people, deprived of their trade, and unable to fish, were beginning to suffer severely. De Witt saw the necessity of making peace. Cromwell, who had now succeeded to the chief power in England, proved an easier taskmaster than the Parliament had been. He was willing to leave the United Provinces their independence, but he exacted their consent to the Act of Navigation, and their acknowledgment of the superiority of the English flag. Sharing with de Witt his dislike to the House of Orange, whom he looked upon as the chief supporters of the Stuart cause in Europe, he insisted on the perpetual exclusion of that house from the stadtholderate by the estates of Holland, as a necessary preliminary to peace. After protracted negotiations a treaty was at last signed on this basis in 1654.

The Act of Exclusion, 1654.

John de Witt had thus succeeded in saving his country from destruction and in dealing his chief enemy a serious blow at the same time. To do away with the rivalry of the two nations, and to make the Dutch forget that a foreign power had compelled them to do injustice to a family which had served them with singular

Continued rivalry with England, 1654-1665.

loyalty was beyond his power. The war ceased but the causes of the war remained. Each country was ready to continue the struggle when a fitting opportunity presented itself, but as long as the Commonwealth existed in England an identity of interest between the two governments served to keep things quiet. The English Restoration in May 1660 altered these relations, and so far strengthened the partisans of the House of Orange as to enable them to demand and gain the revocation of the Act of Exclusion by the estates of Holland in September 1660. The accession of Louis XIV. to power in 1661 further weakened the republican party by placing at the head of the councils of Europe one who regarded all republics with aversion, and looked upon 'messieurs les marchands' his neighbours with a contempt which was born of envy. Every month tidings came to the English government of some fresh defeat of the East India Company by its Dutch rival, of some new indignity inflicted on English sailors. Even the slave trade to Barbadoes had passed into Dutch hands. The time seemed to have arrived when it was necessary to make reprisals. In 1664 a piratical fleet was sent with the cognisance of the English government to the Guinea coast, which captured several Dutch ships and drove out the Dutch settlers from Goree and other places. In the same year a similar expedition to America seized New Amsterdam, which Charles unblushingly accepted and made over to his brother James, from whom it took its better known name of New York. After this war was inevitable, and in March 1665 it was formally declared. The Dutch had profited by the experience of the late struggle; their ships were now better manned and their guns of heavier calibre. Only in seamanship did the English have the superiority, but that sovereign quality could not fail to make itself felt. Gradually, after heroic struggles, the Dutch were beaten back. On June 3d, 1665, Opdam was defeated and killed off Lowestoft. A year later in the terrible four days' battle in the Downs Ruyter and Tromp were driven back to the Texel. In August Ruyter

Second war with England, 1665-1667.

was forced by Monk to take refuge in the shallows of Zealand, and the Dutch merchant fleet was burned in the harbours of Flie. The misfortunes of the war renewed civil dissensions. Again was heard in louder accents the cry for the restoration of the House of Orange, and de Witt found himself obliged at least to accept the young prince as the child of the state and educate him in the affairs of government.

Energy of de Witt.

Neither foreign war nor civil disturbance could damp the energy of de Witt. He ceaselessly endeavoured to repair by diplomacy what he had lost by arms, and he partly succeeded. Louis was bound by treaty to help the Dutch, and, although it was not possible to induce him to give active assistance of any value to a nation whom he hated and intended to ruin, de Witt did succeed for some time in preventing him from making common cause with the English. With other nations he was more fortunate. Denmark and the Great Elector openly allied themselves with the Dutch in 1666, and compelled the warlike bishop of Münster to make peace, who had invaded Overyssel in the interests of England the year before. The Quadruple Alliance signed later in the year 1666 between the United Provinces, Brandenburg, Denmark and Brunswick-Lüneburg, secured to de Witt help in the case of French aggression. But the most effective allies of the Dutch came from the enemies' camp. The recklessness of Charles's extravagance made it impossible properly to repair the necessary ravages of even victorious war. The great plague which devastated London and its neighbourhood in 1665, and the great fire which destroyed half the city in 1666, made the raising of supplies more difficult still. At the beginning of 1667 England though victorious was exhausted and almost bankrupt. Charles in his isolation had recourse to Louis. By a secret engagement negotiated through the queen-mother, Henrietta Maria, Charles threw himself into the arms of Louis, and promised him a free hand in the Low Countries in return for Louis's support to his crown. At the instigation of France negotiations for peace were begun at

Breda in May 1667, but Charles, sure of Louis's secret help, was in no hurry to come to terms. De Witt determined to read him a lesson. Quietly on the 6th of June the Dutch fleet under Ruyter and Cornelius de Witt left the Texel. Next morning they were sailing up the Thames in triumphal procession. They seized Sheerness, sailed up the Medway to Rochester, captured the *Royal Charles*, burned three other ships of war, and were only checked on their route to London by the sinking of boats across the river above Chatham. This unpleasant reminder of his impotence brought Charles quickly to terms. The Act of Navigation was relaxed so as to permit the Dutch to carry to England German and Flemish goods. England retained New York and the Dutch the port of Poleroon in the East Indies. Other conquests were restored.

Treaty of Breda, 1667.

Once more war had proved but a sorry engine for putting an end to national rivalry. The success of the Dutch in 1667 no more gave to the United Provinces the monopoly of the trade of the world, than their defeat in 1654 had deprived them of their share in it. 'Must we then,' said the Dutch envoy to Monk before the beginning of the war, 'sacrifice our commerce to yours?' 'Whatever happens,' bluntly replied the rough soldier, 'we must have our part.' And so it happened. The protracted and stubborn duel between the two greatest maritime powers of Europe only enforced the truth that the world was wide enough for both. Upon the two principal combatants it had more serious and wide-reaching results. It taught Charles II. that he could not enjoy life and indulge his political ambition as he liked without the assistance of France. It taught John de Witt the importance of the friendship of England in face of the ambition of Louis XIV. It thus led directly to the Triple Alliance, and helped to blind de Witt's eyes to the fact, that that alliance had not clipped Louis's wings, because for the time in deference to it he had consented to fold them.

The whirligig of fortune had in fact made the worthless

Charles II. of England the arbiter of Europe, while both Louis XIV. and John de Witt believed that the decisive voice was with them. Louis had determined on the ruin of the Dutch, but he did not dare to face the united fleets of England and the United Provinces.

Dangers from France.

John de Witt was under no illusions as to the dangers which were threatening him from France. He knew quite well that the old relations of friendship and dependence had passed away with the treaty of Münster and the development of Dutch trade. Ever since the treaty of Münster it had been the cardinal point in Dutch foreign policy to support the Spanish government in the Netherlands, in order to keep the French away from Antwerp and the Scheldt. Ever since the peace of the Pyrenees it had been the main object of French foreign policy to gain the fortresses of the Spanish Netherlands as an adequate defence to Paris. Ever since the war of devolution it had been the undisguised ambition of Louis XIV. to seize the whole of the Spanish Netherlands as the first instalment of his inheritance in the Spanish empire. French and Dutch interests were sharply antagonistic on this essential point of policy. Commercial differences were no less pressing. Colbert had so arranged his protective system as to injure Dutch trade as much as possible, and the Amsterdam traders were furious at this unneighbourly treatment. Louis himself never affected to conceal his personal dislike to the rich and Protestant republic, which dared to run athwart his designs. Yet in spite of all this, in spite of the continued war preparations of Louis, in spite of his ceaseless diplomatic activity, in spite of the withdrawal of Sweden from the Triple Alliance, in spite of the ominous sleepiness of Leopold, and nonchalance of Charles, de Witt could not bring himself to believe that Louis would ever be able to turn his threats into action. The success of the Triple Alliance had been so commanding, its effect so instantaneous. The temper of the English people had been so thoroughly roused against Louis. Europe had shown itself so sensitive

Blindness of de Witt.

of his aggressive policy. As long as the ascendency of the republican party in the United Provinces was secure, as long as no civil dissensions interfered to weaken their action, John de Witt believed himself safe and Europe at his command. He did not know that Charles had sealed his destruction in the secret treaty of Dover. He had no suspicions of the partition treaty between Louis and the Emperor. Deceived by the two powers he most trusted, secure in the results of his own diplomacy as he saw them, he did not even think it necessary to take ordinary precautions. By the Perpetual Edict, as modified by the Project of Harmony accepted by the republic in 1668, he flattered himself he had secured internal peace without sacrificing the republican ascendency. By those acts it was declared that the same person could not be at once stadtholder and captain and admiral general, and it was provided that the young prince should be intrusted with the command of the army at the age of twenty-two. By this division of the civil and military powers de Witt thought he had secured the republic against a renewal of the *coup d'état*, and guaranteed the political ascendency of Holland. Yet, so jealous was he of the prince and his party, that even then he did not dare to strengthen the army. While Louis was forming vast magazines, and massing thousands of men on the frontier, the Dutch fortresses were being allowed to perish and the Dutch army was being deliberately starved in men and munitions lest the republican supremacy should be endangered. The state was being sacrificed to the government.

The Perpetual Edict, 1668.

Retribution was not long in coming. Directly the thunder cloud burst, and the French armies were in full march on Amsterdam, the nation awoke to the fact that it had been betrayed. William was at once declared captain general. A reaction set in, wild and unreasoning as such popular movements usually are. A scapegoat was required. The popular vengeance demanded a victim. The faithful and glorious service of twenty years

Popular movement in favour of William III.

was forgotten, and a blunder magnified into treachery. For the moment the selfish burgher governors of Holland trembled under the terror of a popular outbreak. They were relieved to find the fury of the populace directed against de Witt alone. On June 21st 1673, John de Witt was attacked by ruffians in the streets of the Hague, who fled for refuge to William's camp leaving their victim half dead. In August his brother Cornelius was arrested and put to the torture. On the 20th John de Witt was induced to visit his brother in the prison. They were caught like rats in a trap. An infuriated mob surrounded the prison, broke open the gates, dragged the victims forth, and beat their brains out, while the Calvinistic clergy hounded them on to their butcher's work. William himself, cruel, callous, and calculating in 1673, as he afterwards showed himself to be in 1692, took care to know nothing and to do nothing which could stop the impending outrage. As in the massacre of Glencoe, he looked the other way at the time and tried to screen the perpetrators from justice afterwards. An accessory before the fact, and an accessory after the fact, all that his apologists can say for him is that his ambition necessitated the sacrifice of his humanity.

Murder of de Witt, 1673.

CHAPTER XI

LOUIS XIV. AND WILLIAM III.

1672-1698

The war between France and the Dutch—The campaign of 1672—Refusal of reasonable terms—Coalition against France—The campaigns of 1674-1675—Exhaustion of France—The peace of Nimwegen—Virtual defeat of Louis's policy—The character and influence of William III.—The quarrel of Louis with the Papacy—The four resolutions of 1682—Analogy to the English Reformation—Settlement of the dispute—Policy of religious uniformity—Influence of Madame de Maintenon—Persecution of the Huguenots—Revocation of the Edict of Nantes—Aggressions of Louis—Formation of the league of Augsburg—Quarrel between Louis and James II.—The war of the league of Augsburg—Importance of the naval operations—Exhaustion of France—Peace of Ryswick.

THE year 1672 saw Louis XIV. at the height of his glory, and France at the summit of the prosperity to which she attained under his guidance. He was in the prime of life, his court was the most magnificent and distinguished in Europe, his palace the most splendid, his throne the most assured. As yet no breath of domestic or national misfortune had visited the complexion of his fortunes too roughly. Alone among the monarchs of Europe, thanks to the thrifty administration of Colbert, he enjoyed the supreme satisfaction of a well-filled treasury; and if since the war of devolution occasional grumblings made themselves heard about the reimposition of taxes once remitted, yet few of the taxpayers would not be constrained on examination to admit that if the taxes had risen, their

Grandeur of Louis XIV., 1672.

power of paying them had doubled. Through the willing service of able negotiators his diplomacy was triumphant in all quarters of Europe. There was not a state which did not dread his displeasure, which was not prepared to sacrifice something for his friendship. The watchful diligence of Louvois had given to him as the champion of his honour, and the instrument of his ambition, a professional army, superior in discipline, in organisation, in leadership to all the other armies of Europe put together. His navy, already more powerful than that of Spain, threatened soon to rival the English and the Dutch on their own element. England was already his vassal, Sweden Poland and half the petty sovereigns of Germany his subsidised allies, Spain his defeated enemy. Only the upstart merchants of Amsterdam ventured to assert their independence of him and to dispute his authority. He had but to stretch forth his hand and seize the fruit of supremacy over Europe thus temptingly lying open to his grasp. He had but to 'travel' in the United Provinces to reduce them to due submission.

Nevertheless he was wise enough to neglect no precaution to ensure the safety of his travelling tour. It was in no empty, braggart spirit that he made war upon so tough an enemy in so difficult a country. Charles II., in pursuance of the treaty of Dover, declared war upon the Dutch in March, and Louis trusted to him with the assistance of one hundred and twenty French vessels to keep the formidable Ruyter quiet in port, while the great effort was being made by land. Charleroi was chosen as the basis of operations, and large stores of every warlike necessity were collected there by Louvois with the utmost diligence. Further magazines were established at the advanced post of Neuss near Dusseldorf in the electorate of Köln. No longer, as in the days of Wallenstein, was war to support war, but for the first time in modern warfare the army was to be regularly provisioned from its base by means of magazines established along the line of route. In the early spring 176,000 men

The Dutch war, 1672.

were massed at Charleroi under the orders of Condé and Turenne. On the 5th of May Louis joined the army and the storm burst upon the devoted Dutch.[1] Marching down the Meuse valley past Liége and Maestricht, masking the latter fortress as he went, an operation hitherto unconceived of, he turned sharply to the right at Ruremonde and reached his magazines at Neuss on the Rhine safely on the 31st. Having thus gained the Rhine valley he pushed Condé over the river at Kaiserwerth to sweep the right bank and capture Wesel, while Turenne marched down the left bank and made himself master of the smaller fortresses of Orsoy Rhynberg and Bürick. On the 6th of June Turenne rejoined Condé at Wesel, and the whole army poured down the right bank unchecked across the frontier of Guelderland, until it was brought to a stop on the 11th by the little stream of the Yssel, behind which William was posted at the head of all the available Dutch troops. The hesitation was but momentary. Instead of forcing the line of the Yssel in the face of the enemy, always a most hazardous operation, Turenne determined to turn it. On his left flank as he faced William on the Yssel ran the broad but fordable stream of the old Rhine, which, leaving the main branch of the river, called the Waal, in a northerly direction, receives the water of the Yssel a few miles farther down at Arnheim, where, turning again to the west, it flows on to the sea. Half-way between Arnheim and the junction of the Waal and the Rhine is the ford of the Tolhuys. There, on the 12th of June, Condé crossed the old Rhine with his cavalry almost without opposition. On the next day a bridge was thrown across the stream, and the king and the whole army followed. After securing Nimwegen in his rear, Louis marched down the left bank of the old Rhine and crossed it again a little below Arnheim without difficulty. He had thus completely turned William's position on the Yssel and conquered the far more formidable difficulties of the country.

Campaign of 1672.

[1] See map, p. 241.

When he left Charleroi, only six weeks before, he had, between him and the heart of his enemies' country, the deep difficult and treacherous streams of the Meuse, the Waal, and the Rhine, defended at the most critical points of their course by the formidable fortresses of Maestricht, Wesel, Nimwegen and Arnheim. Well might de Witt and the Dutch have calculated that, according to the usual movements of war in those days, there was material there for two campaigns at least. By the brilliant strategy of Turenne—for to him the plan was due—all these difficulties had been surmounted, and Louis was within striking distance of Amsterdam itself, without having fought a battle, almost without the loss of a man. The crossing of the Rhine at Tolhuys was indeed in itself a military operation of the fourth order, as Napoleon called it. So was the blockade of Ulm in 1805, but both marked the successful conclusion of an offensive campaign which evinced the highest qualities of strategical skill.

Just in the very crisis of success Louis drew back. Condé urged him to make the most of his opportunity, push on to Amsterdam and end the war at a blow. There was no one to resist him. He might have 'travelled as safely' to Amsterdam as he had hitherto 'travelled safely' to Arnheim. But with inconceivable folly he refused, sent Turenne towards Rotterdam, and sat down himself before the petty forts on the Yssel. Rochefort, acting on his own initiative, rushed forward with some cavalry to seize Muyden, and so prevent the cutting of the dykes outside Amsterdam, but he was too late. A Dutch garrison was thrown in just in time. De Witt had ordered all to be in readiness to let in the water directly the peasantry had moved from the doomed fields. For a few days the anxiety was intense lest the French should appear before all was prepared, but on the 18th the signal was given. The sea resumed her ancient mastery and Amsterdam was safe on her island throne.

The cutting of the dykes.

A breathing space was all that was required. If the Dutch could save their independence until the winter was

passed, it was pretty certain that a coalition against France could be formed. On the 7th of June the victory of Ruyter over the combined fleets of France and England removed all danger from the sea. Holland was safe, and stood firm against all suggestion of submission, but the other provinces either in the hands of Louis or exposed to his irresistible power desired peace. For the time they prevailed, and an embassy reached Louis at the end of June offering him 6,000,000 of livres and the fortress and district of Maestricht. This would have made him absolute master of the Spanish Netherlands whenever he chose to occupy them, yet at the advice of Louvois he deliberately threw away the solid results of his success merely to gratify his pride. He demanded that the Dutch should acknowledge their dependence on him, maintain Catholicism with public money, suppress all commercial edicts unfavourable to France, and pay 24,000,000 of livres. This was in fact to demand the surrender of their independence, and was only another way of saying that the war was to be a duel to death. They accepted the position, elected William III. stadtholder and captain and admiral general, and began to organise a coalition against the tyrant of Europe. In October 1672 the Emperor Leopold and the Great Elector made common cause with the Dutch and the war became European.

Refusal of reasonable terms of peace by Louis.

Coalition against France.

The difference was at once noticeable. Turenne was sent across the Rhine into Westphalia to prevent the imperial troops under Montecuculli and the Brandenburgers from crossing to the assistance of William from Germany, while Condé was told off to guard Alsace from invasion. The French army thus divided into three parts lost its decisive superiority. Yet, thanks to its superior organisation and the genius of Turenne, it emerged victoriously from the campaign of 1673. William was kept quiet by Luxembourg, while Turenne, by brilliant manœuvring,

Campaign of 1673.

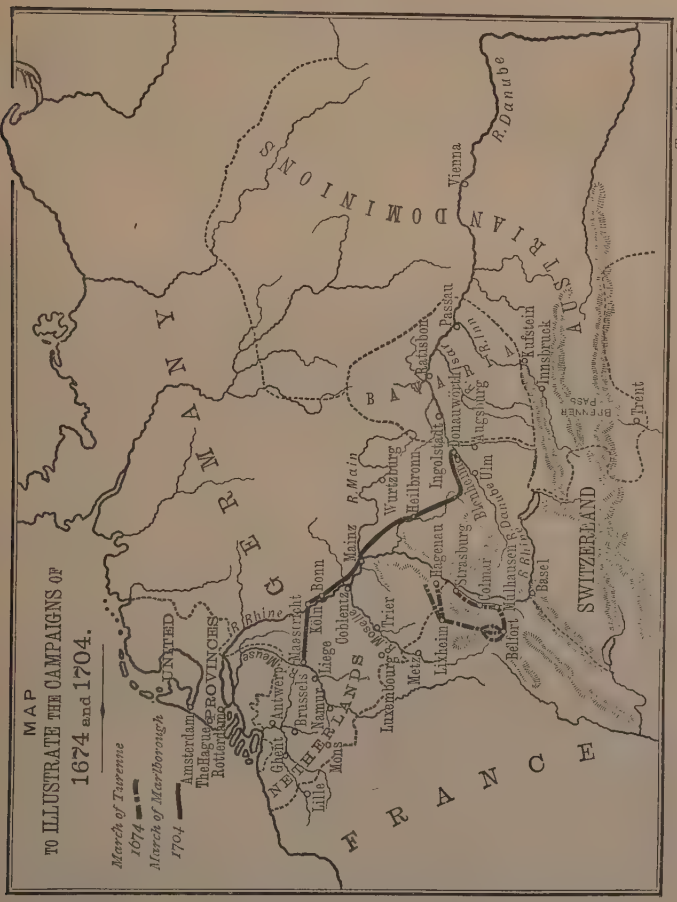
checked Montecuculli's advance on the Rhine, separated him from the Great Elector, and driving the latter back to Halberstadt, forced him to make peace on June 6th. But at sea the Dutch maintained their superiority. On August 21st the intrepid Ruyter inflicted a final defeat upon Rupert and the English fleet off the coast of Zealand. He remained at the close of the day master of the channel, and as long as the water-way was open Holland was safe.

In spite of Louis's success in the field, the coalition continued to grow. In August 1673 it was joined by Spain and the duke of Lorraine, in January 1674 by Denmark, in March by the Elector Palatine, in May by the diet of the Empire, and in July the Great Elector ventured again to draw the sword. By the middle of the year 1674 nearly all Europe was engaged against France. Meanwhile her own allies were falling off. In the autumn of 1673 Montecuculli succeeded in outwitting Turenne. Slipping past him he joined William on the Rhine and captured Bonn on November 12th. Frightened by this success the electors of Trier and Köln and the bishop of Münster hastened to make peace. But that was not the worst. In February 1674 news came to Versailles that England had separated her interests from those of France, and Louis found himself with Sweden as his only ally alone against the world.

Defection of Louis's allies.

The history of the four remaining years of the war is the history of a noble struggle against impossible odds. However great the superiority of French leadership and of French organisation, it was out of the question that France could for long maintain so unequal a struggle. The allies simply had to tire her out. In the end they must be victorious. Yet for some time victory was rendered doubtful by the skill and resource shown by the French commanders. They saw at once the necessity of acting on the defensive behind the protection of the fortresses of the Spanish Netherlands and the Rhine. In 1674 Condé retiring at once from the United Provinces, out-manœuvred

France and Sweden alone against Europe, 1674.


MAP
TO ILLUSTRATE THE CAMPAIGNS OF
1674 and 1704.
March of Turenne
1674
March of Marlborough
1704
GERMANY
FRANCE
SWITZERLAND
AUSTRIAN DOMINIONS
BAVARIA
NETHERLANDS
UNITED PROVINCES
R. Rhine
R. Main
R. Danube
R. Rhin
R. Inn
Amsterdam
The Hague
Rotterdam
Antwerp
Brussels
Namur
Liege
Maastricht
Bonn
Coblentz
Mainz
Trier
Luxembourg
Metz
Lixheim
Hagenau
Strasburg
Colmar
Mulhausen
Belfort
Basel
Heilbronn
Wurtzburg
Ingolstadt
Donauwörth
Augsburg
Ulm
Ratisbon
Passau
Kufstein
Innsbruck
Trent
Vienna
Ghent
Lille
Mons
Meuse
Mosselle
Isar
Brenner Pass
Typo. Etching Co. Sc.

William on the line of the Meuse and the Sambre, driving him back and capturing his baggage train at Seneff on August 11th. Louis overran Franche Comté, while Turenne assumed the offensive on the Rhine to divert the attention of the imperialists. Crossing the river he advanced to Sinzheim and defeating the enemy there drove him behind the Neckar. The troops at his disposal were, however, not sufficient for him to maintain his ground and defend so large a tract of country as the upper Rhineland. In his difficulty he took a course justifiable only by extreme necessity. Devastating the palatinate with fire and sword he turned all the rich smiling country on both sides of the Rhine into a desert, so that the enemy could not maintain himself there. Having thus limited the area of the campaign he retired behind the Rhine, and prepared to keep his opponent at bay on the other side. For some months he was successful, but late in October the imperialist army, having effected a junction with the Brandenburgers, managed to elude his vigilance, crossed the river at Mainz, and marching up the left bank established themselves securely in lower Alsace. The Rhine barrier was lost. Unless Turenne could recover it before the campaigning season of 1675 began, the tide of war must roll back to the Vosges and the plain of Châlons. Turenne's spirit rose to the crisis. Under his orders was an army of veterans capable of endurance and devoted to himself. He determined on a masterly piece of strategy. The Vosges mountains run parallel to the Rhine, fringing the rich river valley at a distance of some twenty miles from the stream, and ever increasing in height and ruggedness as they trend southwards, until from the mountainous, and in winter snow-covered, group of the Belchen they suddenly sweep down to the plain at the famous Gap of Belfort, which divides them from the Jura. While the imperialists were slowly dispersing themselves among the comfortable towns in the river valley between Strasburg and Mühlhausen, Turenne at the end of November retired

Winter campaign of Turenne, 1674-75.

behind the chain of the Vosges, as if to go into winter quarters in Lorraine. Having put the mountains as a screen between him and his enemy, he suddenly turned south from Lixheim, marched behind the Vosges until he reached the rugged group at the southern end where rise the head-waters of the Moselle. Then dividing his veterans into four divisions he sent them over the mountain passes through the snow in the dead of winter to their rendezvous at Belfort. On the 27th of December the operation was complete. Forty thousand of the best soldiers of Europe were gathered at the top of the rich Rhine valley of Alsace, where the enemy was quietly enjoying himself in unsuspecting security. On the 28th Turenne swept down upon them through the Gap of Belfort, occupied Mühlhausen, defeated the Great Elector at Colmar, and bundled the whole army neck and crop out of Alsace across the river at Strasburg. The Rhine frontier was regained at a blow. Montecuculli was sent for in haste as the only general fit to cope with so terrible an antagonist, but fortune seemed to have deserted his standards. In the spring of 1675 Turenne crossed the Rhine below Strasburg. By a series of skilful manœuvres he forced Montecuculli from the Rhine to the Neckar, from the Neckar back to the Black Forest. There at Sasbach he obliged him to accept battle in a position in which success was impossible. 'I have him now,' said Turenne as he reconnoitred the enemy on July 26th. Almost as he spoke a chance shot struck him on the breast and killed him on the spot.

Death of Turenne, 1675.

With Turenne fell the last hope of France in the field. Montecuculli drove the dismayed French over the river into Alsace, and was only checked by the skill of Condé, who arrived with reinforcements in time to save Hagenau and Philipsburg. Créqui, who succeeded Condé on the Moselle, lost Trier in September. The Swedes, who had made a diversion in favour of France by attacking the Great Elector, were soundly beaten by him on land at

Exhaustion of France.

Fehrbellin, and by the Danish and Dutch fleets at sea in the Baltic. At the end of the year Condé tired of warfare retired from the command. France was growing exhausted. Murmurs were heard on all sides. Already the reforms of Colbert were being undone, and corruption, the sure handmaid of financial distress, was again raising her head. Still, however, the superiority of the French soldier showed itself in battle, and both the Dutch and the imperialists became as tired of fighting battles which they never won, as the French were of winning victories which they could not utilise. Negotiations were set on foot between the Dutch and Charles and Louis which followed the usual tortuous course. William did his best to prevent a treaty, and even wantonly fought a pitched battle with Luxemburg on August 14th, 1678, near Mons, in which thousands of men were killed, in the last desperate hope of breaking off negotiations, although he knew that the peace was almost certainly signed, but it was happily too late. On August 10th, 1678, a treaty was concluded between Louis and the Dutch, on September 17th Spain and France came to terms, and on February 2d, 1679, peace was made between France and the Emperor. Soon afterwards the minor combatants followed suit.

Negotiations for peace.

By these treaties, generally known as the peace of Nimwegen the United Provinces were not called upon to surrender one acre of their territory, while they gained the removal of the hostile restrictions on their trade with France. The barrier of the Spanish Netherlands was not materially interfered with, and Spain even recovered Charleroi and some other towns which she had surrendered at Aix-la-Chapelle, and the frontier was fixed on a fairly straight line, from Dunkirk to the Sambre at Maubeuge. The Emperor recovered Philipsburg, but surrendered Freiburg with the passage of the river at Breisach. The only substantial gain to France was the actual annexation of Franche Comté, and the virtual annexation of Lorraine.

The peace of Nimwegen, 1678.

True to his one faithful ally Louis insisted on the restoration to Sweden of the territories in Germany taken from her by the Great Elector.

The treaty of Nimwegen is often looked upon as the summit of the success of Louis XIV., the pinnacle of his glory. It is rather the first step in his decline, for it marks the limits of his power. He had made deliberately a bid for supremacy over Europe, and he had failed. He had determined on an act of signal vengeance upon the petty nation which had dared to thwart his will, and he had been baffled. But this was not all. Not only was his failure one of fact, but it was one of policy. He had failed in a way which made it certain that he would fail again, if he made a similar attempt. However carefully laid his plans, however skilfully conceived his campaigns, however brilliantly led his armies, he could not fight single-handed against Europe; and Europe was as certain to combine sooner or later against him, if he continued his policy of universal dominion, as the tides were certain to ebb and to flow. The selfishness of a Charles II., the ambition of a bishop of Münster, the greediness of a Swedish oligarchy, the poverty of a Polish nobility, the cunning inertness of a Leopold might enable him to purchase alliance and secure neutrality until the storm-cloud actually burst, until the danger of a French tyranny became instant and menacing. But in the end the web of diplomacy, however deftly woven, was certain to be torn into fragments before the rude shock of the spirit of nationality and the love of independence. De Witt with his policy of the Triple Alliance had shown Europe how the monster might be bridled, and Europe did not forget the lesson. Interests rival to those of France were too numerous, too varied, too deep-seated in national character, to be for long obscured by the arts of diplomacy, or quieted by the alliance of governments. The principle of the balance of power was certain to assert itself sooner or later, and as long as Louis persisted in an attempt to make himself dictator of

Virtual defeat of Louis's policy.

Europe, whether by the conquest of the maritime powers, or by the annexation of the dominions of Spain, or by the disintegration of Germany and Austria, so long would Europe combine against him and prevent that dictatorship from becoming an accomplished fact. Unfortunately, like Napoleon after him, Louis could not bring himself to acknowledge the permanent limits of his power. He could not understand that he had embarked on a policy impossible in the very nature of things. He looked upon Nimwegen as he had looked upon Aix-la-Chapelle, merely as a check in the game which he was playing. He knew he had made some mistakes in his play. A fresh combination of pieces directed by a riper experience could not fail to succeed. So, like the gambler, who, convinced of the infallibility of his system, attributes his losses to mere errors of calculation which experience and care must detect, Louis, in no wise disconcerted by the failure of Nimwegen, began with increased assiduity to weave his plots and repair his errors, so that he might again be ready to assert his claims, when the turn of the cards seemed once more favourable to his fortune.

Character of William III.

In reality while Louis was persuading himself that he was marching by steady and statesmanlike steps to a sure goal, his chances of ultimate success were dwindling daily. The opposition to him in Europe had acquired both a policy and a leader. Never had a hero of a great cause less of the heroic about him than had William of Orange. Taught in the school of adversity, he had become a man before ever he knew what it was to be a boy. Implicated from his birth in a web of intrigue, nurtured in an atmosphere of suspicion, surrounded by foes of his race and cause, his earliest lessons were those of deceit and fraud. Generous instincts withered away in a heart in which affection had ever to give place to policy. At the age of twenty he was heartless as a Talleyrand, unscrupulous as a Walpole, cold, pitiless, and self-concentrated as Macchiavelli himself. Strange indeed was the contrast between this puny, dyspeptic,

selfish, taciturn stripling of twenty, untouched by sentiment, and inaccesssible to love, and the open-hearted, magnificent Louis in the prime of life and of glory, the prince of gallants and the pattern of chivalry. Yet deep down in the cold breast of William there burned a fire more enduring and more intense than any of the fitful flashes which illumined from time to time the soul of the splendid king. Love for his country, which, under the peculiar circumstances of the time, translated itself into an undying and unconquerable hatred of the aggression and tyranny of France, slowly through long years of suffering and of patience, fused the selfish heartlessness of William into metal of heroic stamp. To him was not given the power of witching the world with noble deeds. He could not plan campaigns like Turenne, or win battles like Condé or Luxemburg. He could not enmesh two hemispheres in the bonds of his policy like Chatham, he could not dazzle Europe with the glow of his fame like Charles XII., or entrance it with the richness of personal gifts like Henry IV. He could not command admiration like Gustavus Adolphus, or extort obedience like Richelieu. The depths of mind and of character which move nations and sway the world had no place within the narrow limits of his mean and pedantic nature. But in their stead were developed to an almost abnormal extent the unyielding and tenacious qualities of his stubborn ancestry. Endurance, fortitude, perseverance, inspiring and inspired by unconquerable hate and enlisted in the noble cause of patriotism and liberty, made him a hero in spite of himself. He would not recognise failure, he would not accept defeat. He knew not the meaning of despair. Never for an instant was he tempted to put personal ambition before public duty, for to him the public duty of resistance to France summed up his personal ambition.

Ennobling influence of his enmity to Louis.

He valued the crown of England only because it enlisted the power of England on his side against the great enemy. He was prepared to abdicate the moment he found that

England was but half-hearted and insular in her views about the war. To die in the last ditch was in his mouth no empty or braggart boast. He would no more have dreamed of surrendering the religion and liberty of his country to Louis XIV. than would Leonidas of submitting to the Persians at Thermopylæ. He waged the military and diplomatic struggle of thirty years in the spirit of that declaration. He fought throughout not as a conqueror but as a defender, till he won for himself the position of the saviour of his country, and the champion of the liberty of Europe. Concentrating all his faculties on the personal duel in which he was engaged, he never fully realised the magnitude of the issues at stake, and the far-reaching effects of the policy which he had undertaken. To his successors fell the task of reaping the harvest prepared by his patient and painful husbandry, to resettle the map of Europe after the overthrow of the tyrant, and to lay down at Utrecht a new balance of power. Naturally he could not know that Steinkirk was but the prelude to Blenheim, and that la Hogue alone made possible the glories alike of Plassey and Quebec; yet if his spirit was permitted to follow the Maison du Roi in their flight from Ramillies, or a century later to brood over the shattered hulks amid the storms of Trafalgar, well might he proudly have claimed for himself his share in the wreaths of laurel which encircled the brows of Marlborough and of Nelson.

For ten years Europe was at peace, but it was a peace which was in reality little more than a breathing space, devoted by both parties to preparations for the next round in the struggle. While William was plotting and scheming for his father-in-law's crown, Louis was strengthening his frontier by diplomacy as well as by arms. Both realised that the duel was still undecided, both hesitated to be the first to loose again the dogs of war. Meanwhile other difficulties of a serious nature came up for settlement in France herself. The Church of France had always maintained a much greater independence of the

Quarrel of Louis with the Papacy.

authority of the Pope than had been the case in Spain or in Italy or in Germany since the Reformation. The long continued presence of Mohammedanism in Spain, and the pressure of heresy in Germany, had naturally tended to augment the personal authority of the Pope over those countries. In France the tendency had been the other way. National spirit and national pride called out by the liberation of the country from the English yoke, and employed in the task of conquest in Italy, emphasised national rights and distinctions. As in England the feeling of the people was strongly anti-papal, and it was the Crown not the Church which found it to its interest to make surrender to the claims of the Roman Curia, in order to gain a useful ally in its struggle with the nobles. As however the royal power in France gradually made itself supreme over all departments of the national life, the kings began in their turn to take up the cudgels against the Pope in a quarrel, which could not fail in the end to minister to their own greatness. Francis I. was within an ace of declaring France independent of the Holy See, the Valois kings refused for many years to take any part whatever in the council of Trent, and when the cardinal of Lorraine did appear with the French bishops, it was rather to present an ultimatum than to take part in a discussion. The doctrinal decisions of the council were never formally accepted by France at all. Heresy, in the form of Huguenotism, was suppressed in France much more by the Crown than by the efforts of the Pope, and the Jesuits were only admitted into France under strict limitations. Richelieu and Mazarin, though cardinals of the Roman Church, did not hesitate to pursue a policy in strong opposition to the wishes of the Pope, and Louis XIV. himself had not scrupled in the earlier years of his reign to put a public indignity upon the Pontiff. The very orthodoxy of the kings themselves and of their government made them the more jealous of all exercise of authority in their dominions by another sovereign, even though he was the Pope.

The independence of the Gallican Church.

Among the acknowledged rights of the Crown of France was that of receiving the emoluments of all benefices during vacancy, which was known as the *regale*, but it was a right which depended solely upon custom, and obtained only in the ancient dominions of the Crown of France. In spite of this, in 1673, Louis XIV., pursuing his usual policy of royal aggrandisement, issued an edict asserting that according to law and to custom the *regale* applied to all the bishoprics of the kingdom. On this the bishops of Pamiers and Alais, who were theologically opposed to the Jesuit influence dominant in the court, protested and appealed to the Pope, Innocent XI. who at once gave his decision in their favour. This action on the part of the bishops and the Pope raised the question out of the category of a money dispute between the Crown and some of the clergy, into that of a grave constitutional question between the Church of France and the Pope. Men asked themselves in France what right the Pope had to interfere with the emoluments of the Crown, just as in England one hundred and fifty years before they had asked themselves by what right the Pope claimed the first-fruits of English benefices. But Louis XIV. was fortunate enough to find ready to his hand a champion of his cause far more noble than a Cranmer or a Cromwell. To the orthodoxy of Sir Thomas More, Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, added the fervid eloquence of S. Bernard and the learning and taste of Erasmus. In him the flame of patriotism burned at fever heat. Deeply imbued with the principles of his age loyalty was to him the first of virtues, and the king dilated before his dazzled eyes, not as the grasping tyrant that he really was, but as the God-given champion of an oppressed Church. Bossuet felt that the mantle of Gerson and d'Ailly had descended upon him, and at the bidding of the king, under his leadership, the French clergy set themselves to follow up the work of the council of Constance and put limits to the autocracy of the Roman Pontiff. Constitutionalism once more raised its head

Claim of the regale over the whole of France.

Denied by the Pope.

The four Resolutions, 1682.

for a brief period within the bounds of the Roman obedience. In 1682 the king summoned an assembly of clergy to meet at S. Germain and consider the difficulty. Bossuet at once took the lead, and at his instigation the assembly recognised the right of the king to the *regale* all over France, and passed four resolutions on the limits of the power of the Pope.

(1) That sovereigns are not subject to the Pope in things temporal, neither can they be deposed by him nor their subjects freed from their oaths of allegiance by him.
(2) That a general council is superior to the Pope.
(3) That the power of the Pope is subject to the regulations and canons of councils, and he cannot decide anything contrary to the rules and constitutions of the Gallican Church.
(4) That the decisions of the Pope are not irreformable, except by the consent of the universal Church.

These resolutions thus passed by the clergy were registered by the Parlements, and accepted by the Sorbonne, and became law of the land which all loyal subjects were bound to obey.

Thus was raised once more the old constitutional question between the Church and the Pope. The decisions of the Assembly of S. Germain had behind them a weight of authority and practice, unquestioned in the primitive Church, repeatedly asserted in the medieval Church, formulated at the council of Constance, lately vindicated at serious risk by the English Church, but clean contrary to the pretensions of the Hildebrandine Papacy and the decisions of the council of Trent. It was absurd to expect that a Pope however weak could at a moment's notice turn his back upon a theory on which the Papacy had continously acted for six hundred years. Innocent felt that he had no choice in the matter. He at once condemned the decrees, and refused to issue the usual bulls sanctioning the consecration of priests who had accepted them to the episcopate. Before many years had passed there were no less than thirty sees in France without a bishop, and hundreds of cures without canonically instituted priests. The

Constitutional question between the Crown and the Pope.

condition of affairs was singularly like that in England when the statute in restraint of the payment of Annates was passed. Each country had solemnly asserted a view of the constitutional rights of the Church within its borders, which was diametrically opposed to that of the Papacy, and was denounced by the Curia as schismatical. In support of the national theory the majority of the clergy in each country was prepared to enter at the bidding of the Crown into a contest with the Pope, which could but result in the increase of the royal authority over them. In the mouth of Louis XIV. as in that of Henry VIII. the liberties of the national Church meant in reality the power of the national king. But unlike Henry VIII. Louis XIV. was too wary to be pushed to extremes. He carefully avoided any overt act which could be construed into an undue assertion of independence. He contented himself with a purely negative position. Where bulls were refused the sees remained vacant, and the Crown enjoyed the profits of the vacancy. There was no divorce question to complicate matters. Henry VIII. could not wait, Louis XIV. could. Consequently, in spite of much talk about a patriarchate of France, no definite steps had been taken to increase the difficulties of a settlement, when it became the obvious interest of both sides to restore peace. In 1693, when Louis was involved in the war of the League of Augsburg, and the influence of Madame de Maintenon had become paramount at court, he found the continuance of his quarrel with the Pope both undignified and prejudicial. Innocent XII. the new Pope was willing to meet him half way. The articles of S. Germain were repudiated, the Pope recognised and sanctioned all the royal nominations, and ecclesiastical affairs resumed their wonted channel. Ten years of warfare had done nothing more for Louis than to enrich the literature of France by some valuable works on church-government, and to assist his rival William of Orange to the throne of England.

Analogy to the English Reformation.

Settlement of the quarrel, 1693.

Indirectly, however, there is little doubt that this memorable

quarrel with the Pope did much to urge Louis to the committal of the greatest blunder and crime of his reign— the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Since the suppression of their political power by Richelieu the Huguenots had given up all political ambition. Satisfied with the free exercise of their worship permitted by the edict, the Huguenots of the middle class had devoted themselves with great success to industrial employments of various kinds, while numbers of the nobles, who had only embraced Huguenotism from political motives, came back to the Church now that their interest and associations led them in that direction. Even in the troublous days of the *Fronde* the Huguenots remained strictly and significantly quiet, and when Colbert took up the reins of administration he found among them the most skilful the most industrious and the most loyal of French artisans. Unfortunately in the eyes of Louis XIV. and of Louvois their very loyalty and their wealth proved reasons for their persecution. The time had come, as it seemed to them, when the work of Richelieu might be safely pushed to completion. All that he had been able to do was to draw the poison fangs of the serpent, the time had now come when the monster itself might be scotched and killed. The very existence of a special law in favour of one class recognised an imperfection in the uniformity of the body politic. France would not be herself till she was one in religious as in political allegiance.

Policy of Louis toward the Huguenots.

In the seventeenth century to a mind like that of Louis XIV., small in scope but concentrated in grip, there was much that was attractive in such an argument. Those were days when social distinctions, trade interests, local independence were all being ruthlessly sacrificed to the solidarity of the monarchy. Why should not religious distinctions be subject to the same law? However contented and loyal the Huguenots might be, their very existence was an imperfection in an absolute monarchy, which ought only to be tolerated as long as the necessities of state required it. But that

Desire for uniformity.

was not all. Louis himself was somewhat altering in character as he grew older. The cup of pleasure had begun to pall. The artificiality of court life was becoming a restraint to him. The atmosphere of gross adulation by which he was surrounded proved more distasteful every day. Religion, always a strong influence over him, reasserted her claims more imperiously as the pleasures and vanities of life were turning to ashes in his hands. Louis had always been decorously orthodox. He now became fervently devout. His court became more strict in life, more healthy in tone. Simplicity of manners, strong sense of duty, sobriety of conversation reigned in the place of luxury and frivolity. Courtiers complained that Versailles was no better than a monastery. The genius of the change was a woman. Louis as long ago as 1669 had chosen as the governess of his children by Madame de Montespan, the young widow of the deformed burlesque poet Scarron, known to history as Madame de Maintenon. At first he was piqued by the primness and self-restraint of her demeanour, but gradually the beauty of her character, the wit and grace of her conversation, the soundness of her judgment, the force and vigour of her nature, illuminated and sanctified by the purest flame of religious devotion, called out a response from his better qualities, and in the end established a complete mastery over him. In 1683, two years after the death of Maria Theresa, he married her secretly, and although at her own wish she never assumed the dignity of queen, her position was thoroughly well understood both in France and in the courts of Europe, and she received at all hands the respect due both to her rank and her virtues. Her political influence has been much exaggerated, for it was of a quality very difficult to appraise. She rarely if ever interfered directly except in those matters of personal patronage in which her sex is always so deeply interested, but her indirect influence was very strong, not only because Louis had a great opinion of her good sense and frequently consulted her, but more especially because of the power which she wielded invisibly

Influence of Madame de Maintenon.

over the character and mind of the king himself. As under her influence he became more devout, he naturally allowed his increased affection for the interests of religion to mould his policy. As his conscience became more sensitive to the claims of the Church, he felt more than he had done before the scandal of his quarrel with the Holy See, he realised more than before the duties of his position as the first Catholic power of Europe. Probably had Madame de Maintenon lived out the rest of her life in poverty as the widow of Scarron, Louis would still have revoked the Edict of Nantes, have made up his quarrel with the Pope, and have persecuted the community of Port Royal. Still, it is none the less true that he was impelled to that policy by the knowledge that it was approved of by her mind, and strengthened in it by the sense of duty which he had imbibed from her society.

Impelled then by his fondness for uniformity, anxious to prove his orthodoxy in spite of his difficulties with Rome, and believing that the Huguenots themselves were ripe for conversion, Louis began his repressive policy in 1681 by excluding all Huguenots from public employment. They were to be marked by the law, as Roman Catholics were marked in England, as people who were unfitted by their religion to hold positions of trust. But repression was only one side of his policy. While those who obstinately adhered to their independence and their religion were stamped as persons unworthy of trust, those who would listen to reason, and be obedient to the wishes of their lord and father, were covered with benefits and rewarded with pensions. In 1682 missions were held throughout France to convert the heretics. Bossuet devoted himself to the work with incredible zeal and success. An office was established in Paris under a convert named Pelisson to organise the work of conversion. Converts received their rewards in the best of government posts, and the receipt of government pensions. So numerous were they that Louis thought that he might safely proceed to the next step

Disabilities placed upon the Huguenots. Encouragement of conversions, 1681.

and destroy heresy at its root. Edicts were issued closing the Huguenot churches and schools and making it a penal offence for a Huguenot pastor to preach. It soon appeared that he was wrong. Among the middle classes in the south and centre of France there were thousands to whom their religion was of far more moment to them than their property or even their lives. In 1682 numbers of the best and most industrious of the artisans of France began to leave their country rather than abandon their religion. Louis at once forbade emigration under pain of the galleys. There was but one resource left to the poor Huguenots, deprived of all honourable employment in their own country and prevented from seeking it in another. In desperation the mountaineers in the Cevennes rose in tumult rather than revolt in 1683. Stifled almost in its birth by the royal troops it was made the excuse of inhuman barbarities. Dragoons were quartered upon the miserable inhabitants until they renounced their religion. Many a Huguenot who would willingly die for his religion could not bear to see his family and home at the mercy of a brutal soldiery. During the year 1684 this vile system was in force throughout the south of France. Conversions were announced by the thousand. In Languedoc it was said that as many as 60,000 took place in three days. At last in October 1685 the coping stone was put to this edifice of blood and crime. An edict was issued by which all the privileges accorded to the Huguenots by the Edict of Nantes were withdrawn, the reformed worship was suppressed, and the ministers expelled. Huguenotism became from that moment in France, like Episcopacy a few years later in Scotland, an illegal religion outside the pale of the law and proscribed by it.

Emigration of the Huguenots and popular risings, 1682-1683.

The 'Dragonades,' 1684.

Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 1685.

The results of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes were very different from what Louis and his ministers expected. So far from crushing the Huguenots into submission it goaded them into madness. They realised

Results of the measure.

that now there was no chance of peace for them in their own country. One by one, family by family, they fled from their homes leaving behind them their property, taking their lives in their hands. Numbers were caught and sent to the galleys, numbers more escaped, and carried to the enemies of France in England and Brandenburg and Holland the thrift and the skill which under Colbert's enlightened patronage had done so much to make France the wealthiest of European states. Holland dates its industrial revival and Brandenburg its industrial life from the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Huguenot soldiers, like Ruvigny and Schomberg, brought the discipline and training of the French armies to bear fruit in the English and Dutch service. It is said that fifty thousand families escaped in this way to fertilise with their industry the soil of the enemies of France. Those who were left behind, who were too poor or too ignorant to escape, continued in the mountains of the Cevennes a desultory and fanatical struggle with their oppressor. In the days of Louis's greatest need, in the War of the Spanish Succession, they kept the ablest of French generals and an army of veterans from the theatre of war. Eventually in the next reign they obtained and have since enjoyed a grudging toleration. Even the uniformity of religion so dear to the heart of Louis was not attained. Large numbers of Protestants and of Protestant children, it is true, were added to the ranks of Catholicism, but Huguenotism lived on in France, socially and politically insignificant, but still alive. France soon found that persecution had bereft her of her children and her wealth, without even giving her in return that complete national solidarity which formed the excuse for the crime.

The interest of ecclesiastical questions, however intense, however absorbing, never diverted the jealous eye of Louis XIV. for one moment from his own aggrandisement. He did not become the less ambitious because he had grown devout, or the less far-reaching in his plans because they were now largely affected

Aggressive policy of Louis, 1678-1688.

by his determination to play the part of champion of the Church. No sooner was the peace of Nimwegen signed than Louis began to cast about for pretexts for evading it. By the words of the treaty the towns ceded to France were expressed to be surrendered 'with their dependencies.' The ambiguity of this phrase, possibly intentional, gave a great opportunity to that kind of masterful diplomacy which Louis loved. In 1679 he appointed tribunals, called Chambres des Réunions, consisting of members of the parlements of Metz, Beisach, and Besançon to adjudge the territories in Alsace, Franche Comté, and the three bishoprics which were included in this phrase, and accordingly appertained to France. The Chambres well understood their duty. Without hesitation they pronounced all Alsace, Zweibrücken, Saarbrück and other smaller districts to be included in the treaty. No sooner was the decision pronounced than French troops occupied the territories in question, and their annexation to France became an accomplished fact. In vain the diet and the princes whose lands were thus unceremoniously seized protested. Force and possession were on the side of Louis and he knew it. While they were protesting he was cynically preparing for a stroke more audacious still. The great city of Strasburg was included in the decision which gave all Alsace to Louis, but Strasburg could not be occupied in a moment like Saarbrück or Montbéliard. French gold and diplomacy were set to work, the magistrates were bribed or intimidated, and at the end of September 1681 all Europe rang with the news that Louis XIV. was master of the key of the upper Rhine. The skill of Vauban was at once enlisted in its defence, and before the war broke out again Strasburg had been added to the impregnable circle of fortresses, which guarded France and threatened her enemies from Lille to Pignerol. Like his apt pupil Napoleon in after times Louis XIV. thoroughly understood the policy of employing brute force in the time of peace against unwilling enemies, in

The Chambres des Réunions, 1679.

Occupation of Strasburg, 1681.

order to obtain advantageous positions either in diplomacy or war as the basis of future effort. The Emperor threatened by the Turks was unable, Germany was unwilling, to renew the war for the sake of Strasburg, and Louis proceeded calmly and steadily on his way. By an arrangement with Charles of Mantua he occupied Casale in Piedmont the same day that Strasburg fell into his hands. By the truce of Regensburg concluded after a short war with Spain in 1684, and approved by the diet, he secured possession for twenty years of his ill-gotten gains.

Meanwhile no pains were spared by the vigilant and careful mind of Louvois to bring the army to a pitch of perfection hitherto unknown. Camps of instruction were formed, the precursors of the modern Châlons and Aldershot, where 150,000 men were kept constantly at drill. Regiments, no longer farmed as it were by their colonel, were paid, clothed, armed, and victualled by the war office. Stores were collected along the frontier. All France resounded with the clash of arms and preparation for war. Through the zeal of Seignelay, the son of Colbert, similar energy was expended upon the navy. Arsenals were formed at Brest and Toulon. Ships of war were built to the number of one hundred and eighty and fitted with all the appliances of naval warfare as it was then understood. Since the decay of the navy of Spain the command of the Mediterranean had been shared between the Venetians, the Turks, and the Corsairs of Algiers. Now under Duquesne and de Tourville France stretched forth her hand to win an easy supremacy over the Mediterranean, and to claim partnership with England in the rule of the ocean. In 1683 Duquesne destroyed the pirates of Algiers and Tripoli, and liberated their Christian slaves. In 1685 he forced the republic of Genoa to renounce its traditional alliance with Spain and to become the humble vassal of France.

Improvement of the army and navy, 1678-1688.

Naval supremacy in the Mediterranean.

A policy of aggrandisement so open and so unmistakable could not fail to arouse at length the slumbering jealousy of

Europe, but it was long before the enemies of France were in a position to take any active steps. From 1678 to 1685 the danger from the Turks was too pressing to permit the Emperor to involve himself in responsibilities on the Rhine. In 1685 the accession of James II. to the English throne opened out prospects of ambition to William of Orange, which made him unwilling to have his hands tied by the necessity of defending the Low Countries. But gradually as the months passed the blunders of Louis himself gave the opportunity to his enemies which they desired. His continued quarrel with the Pope and his alliance with the Turks alienated the more zealous Catholic opinion in Europe, and deprived him of the support of a sentiment, which at that very time he was most anxious to obtain. How could he claim the allegiance of zealous Catholics, when he was the enemy of the Pope and the friend of the Turk? Yet with what face could he apply to the supporters of Protestantism or the friends of religious liberty, when he was stained with the cruelties of the 'dragonades,' and had just revoked the Edict of Nantes? His intrigues with the Turks had lost him the assistance of John Sobieski and Poland. His seizure of the duchy of Zweibrücken had alienated his old ally of Sweden to whom it belonged. His attack upon Algiers and Tripoli had forfeited the friendship of the Turks. The system of tributary states beyond the frontiers of Germany had completely broken down. The result of this was seen in the secret formation of the League of Augsburg in 1686, between the Emperor, Spain, Sweden, the princes of north Germany, and the United Provinces to oppose the domination of France threatened by the truce of Regensburg. In the next year it was joined by Bavaria and the princes of Italy, and the Pope, Innocent XI., even gave it his secret support.

Blunders of Louis.

Alienation of Europe.

The league of Augsburg, 1686.

For the moment the accustomed political skill of Louis deserted him. Though he knew of the League he hesitated to strike the first blow while his enemies were unprepared.

He even allowed them to deprive him by a sudden stroke of his most important ally. James II. of England was a very different person from his brother Charles. Gifted with much greater energy and independence of spirit, he was wholly destitute of political tact and discrimination. Louis quickly found that he was unable to bend him to his will, and make England humbly attend upon his chariot wheels as heretofore. All that Charles had cared about was a quiet life and plenty of money. James on the contrary had high political ambitions. He wished to make England Roman Catholic, and the English monarchy absolute, and in comparison with these objects he cared not a fig for the aggrandisement of France or the glory of Louis XIV. It was all-important to Louis that James should not embroil himself with his Parliament and people, when France wanted the assistance of the English fleet in the Channel and English soldiers on the Rhine. James on the contrary cared only for his own home policy, and in spite of the urgent remonstrances of Louis, and even of the Pope, was busied in schemes for weakening the English Church, removing the disabilities of Roman Catholics and altering the English constitution. Louis determined to read him a lesson. He remembered how years before he had had to teach Charles II. that he must obey French orders if he wanted French gold. He thought that a somewhat sharper lesson was needed by James II. now. He knew that the malcontent politicians in England were in close communication with William of Orange. He knew that William was fully prepared to attack his father-in-law's throne directly he was sure that his departure for England would not be the signal for French troops to overrun the Low Countries and march upon Amsterdam. He held the fate of James II. at his disposal. William could not move without his permission. At that very moment, in 1688, a disputed election to the archbishopric of Köln gave Louis the opportunity of declaring war upon the Rhine. Persuaded that the invasion of England by William of Orange

Quarrel between Louis and James II., 1688.

must bring about a struggle, which would force James to humble himself and beg for French assistance to crush the rebellion, he deliberately allowed William to sail. The French army was moved from the frontiers of the Low Countries to the Rhine, and occupied the Palatinate. In the midst of his triumph came the astounding news that James II. was a fugitive at Versailles, and the strength of England was added to the formidable coalition which threatened France from all sides.

James driven out of England by William III., 1688.

The war of the League of Augsburg, which lasted from 1688 to 1698, is one of the most exhausting and most uninteresting wars of which history makes mention. Louis found himself alone against the world. Literally he had not a single ally. By the force of circumstances the war on his side was largely defensive. Thanks to his prevision and Vauban's skill, his frontier was defended by a string of fortresses, which in those days of bad roads and worse artillery were only conquerable by the wearisome method of blockade, a method which often, owing to disease and exposure, was more fatal to the besiegers than the besieged. Using these fortresses as a base of operations his generals could advance to deal a blow at the enemy or retire behind them to recruit as occasion demanded. The allies, seeing the immense defensive strength which this gave to the French operations, in their turn fortified fortress against fortress, and Namur and Mons became under the hands of Coëhorn the equals of Lille and Charleroi. The generals too on both sides were well fitted for playing the game of war on such conditions. No strategist worth the name appeared in Europe between the days of Turenne and Marlborough. Luxemburg was a brilliant tactician. On the field of battle he had not an equal. But no one knew less how to win a campaign or utilise a victory. William III. was an excellent war minister, indefatigable in preparation, indomitable under reverses, but his commonplace leadership was never relieved by one spark of genius or even brilliance. In the Low Countries the tide of

The war of the League of Augsburg, 1688-1698.

battle ebbed and flowed about the fortresses of Mons and Namur. The capture of them by the French in 1691 and 1692 and the defeats inflicted by Luxemburg upon William at Steinkirk and Neerwinden, after his efforts to save Namur in 1692, mark the highest point of French military success. The recapture of Namur by William in 1695 is his chief title to military renown, and the evidence of the increasing exhaustion of France. On the Rhine there was no great event which calls for notice, while in Italy the French, though much weakened by constant drafts for the Netherlands, managed to hold their own through the fine fighting qualities of Catinat, who completely defeated the duke Victor Amadeus at Staffarda in 1689, and drove prince Eugene out of Piedmont after the bayonet fight of Civita in 1693.

The real interest of the war centres round the struggle at sea between the fleets of England and France. It was the first tilt in the dread tourney, which occupies the whole of the eighteenth century, which extends from Beachy Head to Trafalgar, and has given England her vast imperial position. The conquest of England and Scotland gave to William III. the navy of England to use against Louis XIV. The continued loyalty of Ireland to James II. made the command of the sea necessary to Louis, for without it he could not hope to maintain James in Ireland for a moment against the whole power of England. The issue of the struggle in Ireland depended therefore wholly upon the issue of the naval war. The great victory of Tourville over the English fleet off Beachy Head in July 1690 made the French for nearly two years masters of the Channel, and more than counteracted the effect of the battle of the Boyne, by enabling Louis to pour French troops and stores into Ireland, and even threaten the invasion of England itself. The defeat of Tourville by Russell off La Hogue put a final end of this dream of French ambition. All thought of invasion had to be laid aside, and Ireland left to the tender mercies of the cruel conqueror. France had to acknowledge the superiority of the

Importance of the naval operations.

English at sea, to acquiesce in the capture and annexation of its colonies in the East and West Indies, to submit to the absorption of its trade by its dominant rival, and to content itself with the impotent but lucrative revenge of the legalised piracy of privateering.

After eight years of war all sides were anxious for peace. To France, exhausted by maintaining year after year four armies at least in the field, peace was a necessity. Already the burden had become almost intolerable. The coinage was debased, the *taille* had been doubled, offices were openly sold, and indeed created in order to be sold, one tenth of the population was without means of subsistence. The government too had fallen into very inferior hands. Colbert, Louvois, and Seignelay were all dead. Pontchartrain who took charge of the finances was incapable, Barbesieux, the son of Louvois, who succeeded to his father at the war office, was young and without experience. When he pleaded his inexperience to Louis, the infatuated king replied, 'Do not disturb yourself, I formed your father and will form you.' He seemed to think human nature was a blank sheet of paper on which he could write what he liked. England too was tired of a struggle which brought her neither glory nor profit. William himself, worn out by disease, hated by his subjects, thwarted by his Parliaments, plotted against by his courtiers, was willing if not anxious to sheathe the sword. In 1696 Victor Amadeus of Savoy left the League and made a treaty with France, and negotiations for a general peace were set on foot, which eventually were brought to a successful issue at Ryswick in 1698 chiefly through the efforts of Boufflers and Portland.

Exhaustion of France, 1698.

By the treaty of Ryswick France surrendered all the towns which she had captured since the treaty of Nimwegen except Strasburg, and agreed that the chief frontier fortresses of the Netherlands should be garrisoned by the Dutch in order to secure their 'barrier.' Clement of Bavaria was acknowledged as the lawful archbishop

The treaty of Ryswick, 1698.

of Köln, and the right of William III. to the throne of England, with the succession to his sister-in-law Anne, recognised. The peace of Ryswick was a serious blow, not merely to the pride of Louis XIV., but to his power. France never had time to recover from the strain of that terrible and heroic struggle before she was again involved in the war of the Spanish Succession. Her finances were ruined, her navy was crushed. And the heir to her greatness was her hated rival. William III. by ousting the Stuarts from the English throne, by forcing France to acknowledge his own right, had changed the personal duel between himself and Louis into a national duel between England and France, a duel in which England had scored the first pass by wresting from France the command of the ocean, and compelling Louis to renounce his claim to be the dictator of Europe and the champion of the cause of Roman Catholicism in England.

CHAPTER XII

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

Indifference of Europe to the growth of the Turkish power—Resistance to it local—Inherent defects of the Turks—Causes of their early successes—Beginning of their decline—The struggle for the Danube valley—Their antagonism to the House of Austria—Turkish misgovernment at the beginning of the century—Mohammed Kiuprili, grand vizier—Revival of Turkish power under the Kiuprili—Attack upon Hungary—Capture of Candia—Condition and institutions of Poland—Decline of its power—War with the Cossacks—Election of Michael—War with the Turks—Victories of John Sobieski—Election of John Sobieski—Risings in Hungary against the Emperor—War between the Emperor and the Turks—Relief of Vienna by John Sobieski—The Holy League—Conquest of the Danube valley and the Morea—The peace of Carlovitz—Reconquest of the Morea—Peace of Passarovitz.

Few facts about European history are so strange as the want of interest shown by the great powers in the empire of the Ottoman Turks until the present century. The Eastern Question as a serious problem of European politics, affecting the peace and welfare of the world, has sprung into existence in consequence of the decay of the Ottoman empire. When the Ottoman Sultans were in the zenith of their power, when Turkish armies were marching up the Danube, when Turkish corsairs were plundering the coasts of Italy and Spain, when Christian communities were being enslaved, and compelled to pay to their conqueror a yearly tribute of children, Christian and civilised Europe took very little heed about the matter. Opposition to the advance of the infidel was mainly local. The Popes occasionally were

Indifference of Europe to the establishment and growth of the Turkish power.

enabled to fit out some small expeditions. Charles v. endeavoured to root out a troublesome nest of corsairs at Algiers. From time to time small contingents of French or German or Burgundian soldiers were sent to the assistance of the Emperor or the king of Hungary. But such efforts were at the best but fitful and self-interested, and the real work of stemming the tide of the Turkish advance was left to the half civilised tribes, mainly of Sclavonic blood, scattered along the valley of the Danube and the hill country of Bosnia and Albania. The Wallach and the Serb, the Albanian and the Magyar were the people who jeoparded their lives and sacrificed their liberty for the salvation of Europe, while the Roman Emperor was waging a death duel with the most Christian king, and the Vicar of Christ was dallying with pagan philosophy. Statesmen and princes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries could not bring themselves to realise the danger of the crisis, could not understand that the East was about to avenge the days of the Crusades, and that the rude threat of Mohammed II., that he would stable his horses in S. Peter's, might at any moment be translated into fact.

Never was a struggle for life and death carried on in so haphazard a fashion. Resistance in the Mediterranean was purely local. The Knights-Hospitallers disputed for years with the conqueror for the possession of their island fortress of Rhodes, and hurled him back eventually in confusion from the rocks of Malta. The Venetians kept the whole Turkish fleet at bay before Candia for twenty years at a most critical period of Ottoman rule. The Pope and the Venetians entered into piratical competition with the corsairs of Greece and Africa, in which the desire to gain money was more conspicuous than the ambition to overcome the infidel. Even the great victory of Lepanto in 1571, at the news of which all Christendom rejoiced, was decisive, not so much because it marked the successful effort of allied Christian powers to resist a common danger, but because it happened to take place at the beginning of a period

Resistance to the Turks mainly local.

of intestine troubles within the bosom of the Ottoman empire itself. On land the story is a similar one. Piece by piece, leaf by leaf, the artichoke of the Balkan peninsula was eaten by the invader, but the process of digestion was a difficult one. The crescent was first seen in the plains of Hungary in the middle of the fifteenth century, yet at the time of their greatest power under Suleiman the Magnificent the Turks never acquired the whole country. Transylvania and Moldavia gave in their adherence to the Porte early in the sixteenth century, the Tartars of the Crimea acknowledged Mohammed II. fifty years earlier, yet they never became anything more than vassal states. Even in Bosnia and Servia, though the Turkish rule was everywhere established, a great deal of local independence was left. Nothing stands out clearer in the history of the Ottoman Turks in Europe than the fact that the limits of their conquests were fixed not by the prowess and skill of their adversaries but by their own inherent defects. When Sigismond of Hungary and the flower of the Franco-Hungarian chivalry went down before Bajazet I on the field of Nicopolis in 1396, when the flag of Mohammed II. floated proudly over the ramparts of Otranto in 1480, there seemed nothing to prevent the triumphant march of the infidel to the heart of European civilisation, over the wasted lands of the king of Hungary and the ruins of the Christian Papacy.

Inherent defects of the Turks.

But fortunately for Europe the Turk had two inherent defects, which effectually prevented him from establishing himself permanently among civilised nations. He could not assimilate, he could not govern. Foresight, perseverance, organisation are denied to him, and they are among the primary and essential faculties of civilised government. The Turks swept down upon Europe as a mighty river flood pours itself out from its mountain gates into the plain below. With an impetuous, irresistible rush it spreads itself wide among the fields and the gardens, submerging one by one all the accustomed

landmarks of hedge and tree and hillock, till all the horizon is but a vast waste of hurrying water. But the further the flood finds its way from the bed of the stream the quieter is its course, the less the damage which it causes. Eddies and back currents check the whirling tide, and even turn its headlong course at the extreme limit of the flood into gentle, fertilising rills which irrigate the meadows in obedience to the will of man. For days or even weeks the flood may last and the swirl of waters boil along, but in the end it wears itself out, the fountains of the hills above dry up, the stream falls quickly back into its accustomed channel, and one by one again the old familiar scenes reappear. Trees and hedges, fields and buildings, greet the eye, but how different indeed from what they were. Torn, ragged, desolate, choked with sand and debris, preserving a faint life amid the desolation, all seems so unlike the once smiling valley. So unlike and yet the same, the same fields, the same trees, the same vigorous life, only for the moment obscured by the sudden catastrophe. In the light and warmth of God's sun, with a little aid from the forethought of man, the promise of rich harvest will soon be seen again. So it has been with the Turkish power in Europe. The Turks submerged the civilisation of south-eastern Europe, they did not uproot it. They injured it, they did not destroy it. They had nothing better to put in its place, and so it lived on, damaged and maimed, but alive. They imposed their own government over the conquered lands, but underneath, the old laws the old religion the old customs were still observed. In the extreme districts beyond the Danube they were content merely to exact tribute, and left their tributaries far more independence than the British government in India allows to the native states. To the larger part of the Turkish dominions in Europe conquest chiefly meant the imposition of a new governing class and of a new dominant religion, a governing class which was intermittently tyrannical, but a religion which was seldom persecuting. Consequently many Christians, who laboured under the taint

Want of assimilation.

of heresy or schism, found themselves actually better off under Mussulman than under Christian rule, and it frequently happened in the wars between Venice and the Sultans that the orthodox Christians of Greece and the islands fought strenuously on behalf of their infidel conquerors, in order to avoid falling into the hands of their Latin persecutors.

Want of governance.

To this inability to assimilate the peoples which he conquered, the Turk added an inability to govern them. He could neither weld together the varied materials of which his loosely jointed empire was composed, nor govern the separate parts. It is singular how few administrators the Ottoman race has produced. It does not possess faculties for government, or for trade, or for art. No sooner had the Turks conquered south-eastern Europe than they found themselves obliged to intrust the administration of their provinces to the children of the people whom they had overcome. Turkish art was but a faint and spoiled copy of Christian and Arab models. Trade remained in the hands of Christian merchants, or fell into the clutches foreign of Christian powers. When the Turks ceased to conquer they ceased to prosper. They became idle, luxurious and inert, lying like an incubus upon the country, deadening and crushing its civilisation and its spirit, hindering all growth, stopping all progress, just as incapable of calling out the resources of a people as of rooting out their national life.

Reasons for their early success.

So as the flood of conquest began to abate the submerged races began to reappear. Christendom had not to reconquer Turkish provinces, as Germany has had to reconquer French provinces, it merely had to remove the foreign incubus which was lying upon them and crushing them, to oust the foreign garrison. Accordingly the tide of Turkish invasion had hardly ceased to flow in south-eastern Europe when it began to ebb. The Turks owed their wonderful success to three causes. The disunion of Christendom, the extraordinary vigour and ability of the earlier Ottoman Sultans, and the institution of the Janizaries

which gave them the best disciplined army in Europe. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries these all combined to advance their power. They came as an army, organised not as a nation but as a camp, led by men second to none among the greatest sovereigns of Europe for military and personal gifts. The strength of their forces lay in the tribute of children exacted from the Christian races, who were brought up in the faith of Islam to be its special defenders and champions in the disciplined life of an army, half fanatical and half professional. They hurled themselves upon Europe at a time when the great powers were slowly and painfully organising themselves into personal monarchies out of the ruins of feudalism, when as yet professional armies were in their cradle. Under Orchan, the founder of the institution of the tribute children, they first crossed over into Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century. Under Murad I. they overran Roumelia and Bulgaria, under Bajazet I. they carried their victorious arms into Servia and across the Danube into Wallachia, and defeated Sigismond of Hungary at the great battle of Nicopolis in 1396. Under Murad II. they spread into Macedonia and Hungary. To Mohammed II. was reserved the crowning honour of the conquest of Constantinople, but he also extended his sovereignty over Trebizond, Greece and the islands of the Ægean, Bosnia, Albania and even the Tartars of the Crimea. At the death of the great conqueror in 1481, the Turkish empire in Europe had reached the dimensions which it retained in the middle of the present century. But it still continued to grow. Under Suleiman the Magnificent, who reigned from 1520 to 1566, it attained its greatest power. He drove the Knights-Hospitallers out of Rhodes, crossed the Danube, captured Belgrade, and turned half Hungary into a Turkish province under a pasha at Buda, while he forced the princes of Transylvania and Moldavia to pay him tribute. So powerful had he become that the powers of Europe began to realise his importance, and Francis I. of France did not

Suleiman the Magnificent, 1520-1566.

disdain to purchase by his friendship the aid of the Sultan against his great enemy the Emperor, and to lay the foundations of French influence in the East by the privileges which he obtained for his countrymen at Constantinople. From that time to the present day French policy has always had for one of its chief objects the maintenance of a group of alliances in northern and eastern Europe, which may serve to threaten Germany with the danger of being caught between two fires, should she find herself at war with France. For many years Sweden Poland and Turkey formed such a group, and the endeavour to keep them in firm friendship with France was always a leading feature of French diplomacy. In the seventeenth century, when the House of Austria was the chief opponent of France, the assistance of Poland and of the Sultan was naturally of great importance. In modern days, during the decay of the Ottoman empire and the growth of the rivalry with northern Germany, the Czar has taken the place of the Sultan as the necessary ally of France. Thus in the sixteenth century, mainly through the selfish policy of the French kings, the Ottoman Sultans found themselves admitted into friendship and alliance with European sovereigns, just at the very time when they seemed to be threatening ruin and destruction to European civilisation.

Alliance with France.

In reality, however, the flood had already reached high-water mark. The Sultans had begun to prefer a life of ease in the palace of Stamboul to the active leadership of the army, or the laborious administration of the empire. Suleiman himself farmed out the taxes and left the management of the affairs of state mainly to his ministers. Under his feeble successors degeneration grew apace. The reins of power fell from the listless hands of the Sultans into those of incapable and despicable favourites. Palace intrigues decided important affairs of state, and ministers were made and unmade by the cabals of women and eunuchs. Corruption spread like a cancer over the whole administration. Discipline became deteriorated in the army, and the Janizaries,

Beginning of Turkish decline, 1565.

like the Praetorian guard, ceased to be the champions of their country's ambition, and became but the heroes of domestic revolutions. In a loosely organised empire like that of the Turks, which stretched from Buda to Bagdad, from the Caspian to the Pillars of Hercules, there was no cohesive force except that of the central government, no centre of unity except that of the ruler of Stamboul in his double capacity of Sultan and Caliph. When the head became effete and incapable the life blood of the whole organism failed and decay began. Under Selim the Sot, the successor of Suleiman, Christendom won its great victory over the Turks at Lepanto in 1571, a battle, which, though its loss was repaired with incredible energy and counterbalanced by the conquest of Cyprus, has nevertheless set for all time the limits of Turkish rule in the Mediterranean, just as the failure of Suleiman's attack upon Vienna in 1529, and the subsequent partition of Hungary, had fixed the extreme boundaries of Turkish power in the valley of the Danube.

The close of the sixteenth century therefore fixed the limits of Turkish advance. The opening years of the seventeenth century marked the first beginnings of Turkish retreat. By the treaty of Sitvatorok, concluded between the Emperor and the Sultan in 1606, the annual tribute of 30,000 ducats agreed to be paid by the Emperor for the portion of Hungary which he still retained under his own government was abolished. From that day to the present the history of the Ottoman Turks in Europe has been that of a gradual but steady decline in the strength of their authority over south-eastern Europe. In the seventeenth century the struggle was for the possession of the valley of the Danube. The contest was a severe one. The Turks fought more strenuously for the command of the Danube than they did for Greece or Bulgaria. Bit by bit with many changes of fortune they were slowly driven back, until soon after the end of the century not an acre of land on the northern bank of the river between the Theiss and the Pruth was still in their possession. Since then the work of liberation

Loss of the command of the Danube valley in the seventeenth century.

has progressed steadily but slowly. One by one the Crimea, Wallachia, Moldavia, Bessarabia, Servia, Greece, Bosnia, and Bulgaria have been won back by Christendom from the rule of the Turk, either to complete independence or to subjection to a neighbouring Christian power. But just as it was the mutual disunion of Christian powers which enabled the Turks to conquer south-eastern Europe so easily in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, so it has been the mutual jealousy of Christian powers which has made the task of emancipation so slow and so difficult in the nineteenth century. For many years the Ottoman Sultans have lived in Europe on sufferance, because it has seemed a lesser evil to the great powers of Europe to retain the Turk than to aggrandise the Czar.

Antagonism to the House of Austria.

Before the ambition of Russia gave rise to the Eastern Question the House of Austria was the Christian power chiefly interested in beating back the Turks. The Emperors no doubt felt somewhat the obligation which lay upon them, as the traditional lords of Christendom, to take the lead in the work of emancipating Christian lands and imperial vassals from the yoke of the infidel. But much more did they feel the political necessity which forced them, as kings of Hungary and Croatia and overlords of Transylvania, to make themselves undisputed masters of the valleys of the Danube the Drave and the Save. With the Turks securely planted at Buda, and within striking distance of Agram, Vienna itself was unsafe, and the communications between Austria and Italy liable at any moment to be cut. The more the Emperor was being deprived of leadership in Germany, the more he was being ousted from influence on the Rhine, the more essential it became to him to retain his hold upon the Danube. So during the whole of the seventeenth century the history of south-eastern Europe is the history of a duel between the House of Austria and the Sultans for political and military supremacy on the Danube and the Save. Other combatants such as the French, the Venetians, the Poles and the Russians, appear from time to time and

take part in the struggle from motives of ambition or patriotism or interest and most powerfully affect its fortunes, but the essential character of the contest remains unchanged. Austria and the Turks fight for pre-eminence on the Danube, just as Germany and France fight for pre-eminence on the Rhine.

Misgovernment at Constantinople, 1603-1656.

Fortunately for the house of Habsburg the time of their greatest weakness was also a time of impotence and degeneracy among their foes. From the death of Mohammed III. in 1603 to the death of Murad IV. in 1640 the Ottoman empire was the prey of revolution anarchy and crime. The Sultans, effeminate puppets of a day, were in no position to take advantage of the opportunities given to them by the Thirty Years' War. The satisfaction of their own pleasures and the preservation of their own lives were much more in their thoughts than the extension of their power. Murad IV. during the eight years of his personal rule (1632-1640) did much by a relentless severity to crush out the spirit of faction, and reduce the turbulent Janizaries to obedience, but on his death after a drinking bout in 1640, anarchy broke out again. Ibrahim I. his successor, having been with difficulty prevented from ordering a general massacre of the Christians all over the empire, contented himself by fitting out a fleet in 1645 which undertook the conquest of Candia; but the disorganisation of the government was far too great to enable the attempt to be made with any chance of success. It only provoked reprisals on the part of the Venetians and the Knights-Hospitallers. The miserable Sultan himself was deposed and murdered in 1648, the Ottoman fleet was defeated in the Ægean in 1649, civil war raged in Asia Minor, while at Stamboul ministers rapidly succeeded one another in obedience to the caprices of the harem or the demand of the soldiery. In 1656 Mocenigo the Venetian admiral occupied the Dardanelles and threatened Constantinople itself. It seemed as if the Ottoman empire was about to fall to pieces through sheer want of governance.

From this fate it was preserved by the firmness of one man

and the genius of a family. The Kiuprili were of Albanian blood, but had long been settled in Constantinople, where the head of the family, Mohammed, now an old man of seventy, was universally respected for the vigour of his mind and the strength of his character. The mother of the young Sultan, in whose hands the chief political power had fallen, turned to Mohammed Kiuprili in her despair, and begged him to accept the office of grand vizier in 1656. He consented on the condition that his authority should be uncontrolled. For twenty years he and his family were the real rulers of the empire, and to them is due the astonishing revival of the Ottoman power in the latter half of the seventeenth century. True to the genius of Oriental monarchies they sought for the sources of strength, not in adaptation to new demands, but in the resuscitation of the ancient spirit. They resolutely shut their eyes to the attractions of European civilisation. They refused as far as possible to have dealings with European powers. Treaties, concessions, arts were evidences of weakness, admissions of a brotherhood which could never exist between Christianity and Islam. The ideal of government ever present to their minds was that of Mohammed II. and the earlier Sultans. The relation of governors to governed was that of master and slave in a well-ordered household, where strict justice on the one hand expected and necessitated implicit obedience on the other. The mission of the Turks was to conquer opponents and to dictate terms to the vanquished. Wherever there yet remained an organised power, Christian in its principles and Western in its civilisation, there was the enemy.

Mohammed Kiuprili appointed grand vizier, 1656.

Success was instantaneous. The Turks at once felt that they had got a leader who understood them, who was actuated by principles which were their own. Obediently they fell in to the bugle call. Anarchy disappeared. Discipline re-established itself. The Greek Patriarch and 4000 Janizaries were the only victims required. In the very next year the Venetian fleet was forced to leave the

Restoration of order and discipline, 1656-1661.

Dardanelles, Mocenigo was killed, and Lemnos and Tenedos recovered. In 1659 the old alliance with France was broken by the imprisonment of the ambassador's son, and the refusal of all compensation. The siege of Candia was pushed on with redoubled zeal, and preparations were made for the renewal of the war of European conquest. When Mohammed Kiuprili died in 1661 he had the satisfaction of seeing the Ottoman empire once more united from end to end of its vast extent, and its energies once more directed to a war of aggression against its hereditary enemy the Emperor.

The mantle of Mohammed fell upon his son Achmet, who succeeded him in his office, inherited his ability, and pursued his policy. Placing himself at the head of 200,000 men he burst into Austrian Hungary in 1663, crossed the Danube at Gran, captured the fortress of Neuhäusen, and ravaged Moravia up to the walls of Olmutz. But Louis XIV., irritated at the insult offered to his ambassador by Mohammed Kiuprili, came to the aid of the Emperor. With the assistance of 30,900 men in French pay Montecuculli the imperialist general felt himself strong enough to threaten the Turkish flank by an advance from Vienna. Achmet at once retired south to cover Buda, and the two armies met at S. Gothard on the Raab, where Achmet and his army proved themselves no match for the talents of his opponent or the wild valour of the French cavalry. Leopold, however, saw only in this great victory the opportunity of making peace, and of ridding himself of any further obligations to France. Ten days after the battle of S. Gothard he signed the treaty of Vasvar (10th August 1664), by which he recognised the suzerainty of the Sultan over Transylvania, and permitted him to retain the important fortress of Neuhäusel in Hungary. Elated with this success Achmet turned his attention to the war with Venice. He took personal charge of the siege operations before Candia, and in spite of all that European engineering skill could do, it soon became obvious that the end could not long be delayed. Morosini the heroic

Attack upon Hungary under Achmet Kiuprili, 1663.

Treaty of Vasvar, 1664.

defender of the town made the capitulation the occasion of negotiating a general treaty. On the 17th September 1669 Crete passed into the hands of the Ottomans, and peace was restored between Venice and the Porte. It was the last conquest Islam has made from Christianity.

Capture of Candia, 1669.

No sooner was the war with Venice over than Achmet found himself involved with a very different Christian power in the extreme northern frontier of the empire. The kingdom of Poland, to which was joined the grand duchy of Lithuania, had discharged during the Middle Ages the office of the sentinel of Western civilisation on its northern frontier. But the civilisation to which it had itself attained was very inferior to that of its southern and western neighbours. Extending as it did, so late as the beginning of the seventeenth century, from Livonia and Courland on the Baltic to Podolia and the lower waters of the Dniester on the confines of the Black Sea, it could not fail to be subject to the dangers of disunion and disorganisation. Its interests were so varied, its territories so impassable and heterogeneous, its people so untameable and independent, that it was almost a hopeless task for even a great statesman to inspire the country with a sense of national unity, and to lead it along the path of national progress. Yet forces which under happier circumstances might have led to contralisation were not wanting. Poland occupied geographically the centre of Europe. Until the rise of Russia on the north and Prussia to the west it was free from serious danger of conquest. Its people were Sclavonic by race and Catholic by religion. With the exception of a few years at the end of the sixteenth century it was untroubled by religious or racial discord. Brave and chivalrous by nature the Poles were distinguished for their personal loyalty and their affection for their country. But all these promising elements of union and strength weighed as nothing in the balance, when compared with the evils of their political and social institutions. The Poles were absolutely

Condition of Poland.

Turbulence of the Poles.

deficient in the capacity for being governed. They never appreciated the advantages of the reign of law. They never understood that individuals must submit to some restrictions if the community is to prosper. Discipline was a virtue wholly unrecognised by them. This lawless and turbulent spirit was fostered instead of being checked by their social institutions. There were but two classes in Poland, the aristocracy in whose hands lay the whole of the wealth and the whole of the political power, and the serfs who were little better than slaves, and had no rights of life or property against their masters. As in all countries where one class is dominant, justice and patriotism shrank and withered before the claims of privilege and selfishness. The determination to use the power which it has got solely for its own purposes, is not the monopoly of one class more than another. It has been the characteristic of the petty democracy of Florence, as of the trading aristocracy of Amsterdam, or the militant democracy of modern France. The landlord aristocracy of Poland pushed it to excess. They mistook licence for liberty, and put personal power in the place of patriotism as unhesitatingly as a Robespierre or a Napoleon. Their great fear was to find that they had unwittingly given themselves a master, so they did all they could to divert the kingship of all real power, and wilfully deprived the country of the only posssible centre of unity. During the Middle Ages the kingship, though always nominally elective, was in fact hereditary, but on the death of Sigismond Augustus in 1572 it became wholly elective, and on his election the king was obliged to sign a compact by which he practically divested himself of all the usual functions of royalty except the appointment of the officials and the command of the army. The government of the country was really vested in the senate, in which the bishops and the higher magistrates as well as the twelve great executive officials sat, and in the diet. Originally the whole adult nobility had the right of attending the diet, but since 1466 it had become merely a body of delegates, who received

Their social and constitutional institutions.

the mandate from the provincial assemblies of nobles, and were not permitted to vary it in the least. The diet sat for six weeks and all its decisions had to be unanimous, consequently it was in the power of every member of the diet to put a stop to all business whatever either by obstructing all progress for six weeks (drawing out the diet), or by voting against the proposal (the veto), or by simply withdrawing altogether, which of course rendered all decision impossible and so practically dissolved the assembly.

A constitution such as this might have been thought to have been the work of some cynical philosopher anxious to exhibit on a large scale the inconceivable folly of human nature. In reality it was dictated by the malignant spirit of fear and selfishness. In the hands of a quick-tempered and turbulent people it could not fail to lead to anarchy, and anarchy quickly proved itself the parent of corruption. France soon saw the advantages which the command of a great central warlike state like Poland would be to her in her duel with the house of Austria. The Emperor was alarmed by the prospect of seeing his hereditary dominions almost encircled by the vassal states of France, and strained every nerve to secure the election of a king opposed to French interests. But the purse of France was deeper, and the policy of France was more continuous than that of the embarrassed Emperor, and so it happened that except under the pressure of some special danger, the diplomacy and the gold of France could always maintain a close alliance between the two countries, and prevent the election of a strongly imperialist candidate. It thus became the interests of the greater powers of Europe to keep Poland in a state of anarchy, in order that they might the easier obtain a decisive voice in her destinies. Her neighbours were not slow to recognise the advantage thus offered to them. Poland was getting weaker and weaker through the increase of anarchy, as they were getting stronger and stronger through centralisation. The rise of Sweden to pre-eminence on the Baltic under Gustavus Adolphus, the

Poland the battle-ground of French and Austrian interests.

restoration of peace to Russia after the 'troublous times' under the house of Romanoff, the successful war and cunning diplomacy of the Great Elector all had among their other results the effect of weakening Poland. By the treaty of Wehlau, 1657, Poland lost her suzerainty over east Prussia. By the peace of Oliva in 1660 she had to surrender Livonia to Sweden. By the treaty of Andrusoff in 1667 she was obliged to give up to Russia almost all her possessions east of the Dnieper, including the important towns of Smolensk and Kief, which she had gained from her earlier in the century, and the suzerainty over half the tribes of the Cossacks of the Ukraine.

War with the Cossacks of the Ukraine, 1648-1667.

It was through her relations with these wild horsemen of the borderland that Poland became eventually involved in a war with the Ottoman Turks. The yoke of Poland had always sat heavily upon the Cossack tribes. Proud independent and high-spirited by nature, they could not brook the insolence of the Polish nobles, or tamely submit to the rapacity and extortion of their Jewish stewards. In 1648 they boldly rose in rebellion and assisted by the Tartars offered their allegiance to Alexis of Russia. The rising was well-timed, for owing to the ambition of Charles x. of Sweden, John Casimir of Poland soon found his country attacked on all sides by Sweden Brandenburg and Russia, his capital in the hands of his foes, and himself a fugitive in Silesia. When, however, peace was restored on the Baltic by the treaties of Oliva, Copenhagen, and Kardis in 1660, Poland found herself able to cope with her revolted subjects and their protector. Through the consummate generalship and high personal qualities of John Sobieski, who was sprung from one of the oldest and staunchest of Polish noble families, Alexis and his allies were compelled to sue for peace, and accept the compromise concluded at Andrusoff in 1667. Two years later John Casimir abdicated the throne, and the usual intrigues began between the adherents of France and the Empire to secure a favourable election. But at the moment through the misfortunes of John Casimir, and the unpopularity of Louise

de Nevers, his French wife, the Poles would have no one of French blood or French connections, and even John Sobieski who had married a French woman, and belonged to the French interest, was passed over in favour of a national representative, Michael Wiesnowiescki, who had nothing but his good looks and his name to recommend him. The Cossacks regarded the election as an earnest of the recommencement of persecution, for the new king was the son of one of their greatest oppressors. In 1670 they rushed to arms but were easily defeated by Sobieski. Despairing of all hope of justice from the king they turned to the Turks, and offered to recognise the suzerainty of the Sultan if he would protect them from the tyrant of Poland. Achmet Kiuprili gladly seized the opportunity, and in 1671 declared war against Poland as the champion of her oppressed subjects.

Election of Michael as king, 1669.

Request for protection by the Cossacks to the Turks, 1671.

In June 1672 the preparations were finished and the Sultan himself accompanied by the grand vizier appeared before the almost impregnable fortress of Kaminiec, the key of Podolia. In less than a month it fell, and the craven-hearted king Michael, dismayed at the blow, negotiated a treaty at Buczacz by which he surrendered Podolia and the Ukraine and consented to pay tribute. Stung with indignation at such a disgrace the diet refused to ratify the treaty, and rallied all the forces of the nation under John Sobieski to resist to the uttermost. For four years the heroic struggle continued. Without receiving any help from the great powers, now, through the ambition of Louis XIV., engaged in a deadly conflict on the Rhine and the Scheldt, threatened by intrigues behind his back at court, endangered by insubordination in his camp, John Sobieski, by sheer ascendency of personal character and commanding military talent, managed not only to stem the Turkish advance into Podolia and Galicia, but to inflict on the best of the Turkish generals crushing defeats at Choczim (1673) and Lemberg (1675), and to drive them back in confusion across the Danube. In 1674 in the very midst of

War between Poland and the Turks, 1672 1676.

the struggle the incapable Michael died, and the Poles hailed with enthusiasm their hero as their king. Yet characteristically enough they did not for that serve him one whit the better. Two years later he found himself in the direst straits, with his small army hemmed in by the swarming enemy at Zurawno on the Dniester, unable to break out of the enclosing lines, without any hope of timely relief. But even at this crisis the magic of his name prevailed, and Ibrahim the Turkish general preferred to make peace rather than to run the risk of encounter with the lion in his den. The peace of Zurawno, concluded in October 1676, secured to the Sultan the possession of Kaminiec and part of the Ukraine, but it marks by these very concessions the failure of Achmet Kiuprili's great design of binding upon the brows of his master the laurel wreath of Mohammed II.

John Sobieski elected King, 1674.

Peace of Zurawno, 1676.

Seven days after the peace of Zurawno Achmet Kiuprili died, but his policy did not die with him. His successor and brother-in-law, Kara Mustafa, was fired with an equal ambition but was not possessed of equal talent. Haughty luxurious and boastful he soon began to destroy, while seeking to extend, the power which Mohammed and Achmet had so diligently built up. He determined to win his way to the heart of Christendom at a blow by the conquest of Vienna itself. Preparations for an invasion on a scale unexampled and irresistible were secretly set on foot. The old alliance with France was renewed by the grant of fresh trade and diplomatic privileges. Peace was made with Russia and ratified with Poland. By these measures the grand vizier hoped to procure the isolation of the Emperor, and he very nearly succeeded. For some years the Hungarians had been on bad terms with the Emperor. Leopold had pursued a policy both of religious and political repression. With the object of introducing more centralisation into the government, he abolished the office of palatine, and ruled Hungary through Viennese officials. With the object

Kara Mustafa made grand vizier, 1676.

of rooting out Protestantism he handed over the management of religious affairs to the Jesuits, and banished and sent to the galleys Protestant ministers on the pretext of seditious agitation. Measures so high-handed and unjust brought about the usual result. The Hungarians took advantage of the war with France on the Rhine, rose against their oppressor in 1674 under Tököli, and were joined by Apafy, the prince of Transylvania. In 1681 they found themselves strong enough to force the Emperor to revive the office of palatine and grant religious toleration. But Tököli was not content with this. He desired to become ruler of Hungary himself, and willingly listened to the persuasions of Kara Mustafa to join the Turkish invasion, and accept the government of Hungary as the tributary of the Porte. All was now ready. Trusting to Louis XIV. to keep Germany from assisting the Emperor, and to Tököli to raise Hungary against him, Kara Mustafa threw off the mask in 1682, declared Hungary tributary to the Sultan, and crossed the Danube in the spring of 1683 at the head of 150,000 men.

Risings against the Emperor in Hungary, 1674-1681.

War between the Emperor and the Turks, 1682.

He had not reckoned on his allies in vain. Wherever the anxious Emperor turned for help in his extremity, he found himself thwarted by the diplomacy of France. In Germany Louis was completely successful. The diet assembled at Ratisbon separated without granting any aid to its chief. In Poland the struggle was intense, but in the end the indomitable energy and quick tact of John Sobieski prevailed. All grumbling at the selfishness and cowardice of Austria in the days of Poland's need was chivalrously silenced in the presence of the common danger to Christianity and civilisation. On March 31st an alliance was concluded with the Emperor by which Poland bound herself to place 40,000 men in the field. Meanwhile the Turkish war rolled on. Leopold and the court removed for safety to Passau. The duke of Lorraine, the imperialist general, abandoning Hungary, intrusted the

Alliance between Poland and the Emperor, 1683.

defence of Vienna to count Stahremberg, and posted himself a little lower down the Danube to wait for the Polish reinforcements. On July 9th the Turkish standards appeared before the walls, on the 14th the city was invested and trenches opened.

The city was ill prepared for a siege. The garrison only numbered 14,000 men, the town was crowded with peasants from the country, the walls were old and out of repair, while the Turkish engineers and artillery were among the best in Europe. But Mustafa was in no haste to seize the prize. On the 7th of August he drove the imperialists from their fortification on the counterscarp, and the city lay open to the attack from all sides. Yet he hesitated to give the word. He wanted the glory of a capitulation, and the booty of the town for himself. Meanwhile John Sobieski was collecting his forces with all haste at Cracow. Lorraine did not dare to move till he came. As usual money was short, delays were long. It was the 15th August before Sobieski could begin his march, and even then he had to leave the Lithuanians behind. On the 2d of September he was on the Danube at the head of his cavalry. On the 5th he took over the command of the united armies of the Empire and of Poland. On the 6th he crossed the Danube by the bridge at Tuln. On the 11th he reached the height of the Kahlenberg and looked down on the vast camp of the Turks encumbering the plain which stretches between the heights and the spire of St. Stephen's. He had come not a moment too soon. The Turkish engineers had already undermined the walls, disease had broken out in the crowded city, but when they saw his signal-fires from the mountain the besieged felt that the end of their trials had come and victory was within their grasp. They were not disappointed. On the morning of the 12th, after having received the Holy Communion at the chapel of the Leopoldsberg, John Sobieski ordered the attack. Quickly driving the Turkish advance guard from

Siege of Vienna, 1683.

Defeat of the Turks by John Sobieski, 1683.

the vineyards which clothe the sides of the Kahlenberg he found himself opposite the main Turkish battle in the plain about noon. As his Poles charged with the war shout 'Sobieski for ever' the Turks were seized with a panic at the sound of the dreaded name and fled on all sides. Sobieski seized the favourable moment with his usual tactical skill, and threw his whole army upon the retreating masses with a tremendous shock before they had time to recover themselves. The battle was won, Vienna was saved, and Christendom preserved. The whole camp of the invader with its streets of tents, its bazaars, its mosques, its luxury, all fell into the hands of the victor. Kara Mustafa himself hardly escaped with his life in the general confusion, and only rallied the remains of his beaten army at Belgrade.

From the date of the failure of the great attempt upon Vienna in 1683 the fortunes of the Ottoman Turks in Europe quickly declined. Kara Mustafa paid the penalty of his defeat with his head, but Ibrahim who succeeded him fared no better in the war. John Sobieski himself inflicted another defeat upon the Turks in the October of the same year at Parkan, and drove them out of Hungary. In the following year Venice joined in the pursuit of the beaten infidel, and the Holy League was formed between the Emperor Poland and Venice against the Sultan. Its effects were quickly seen. In spite of the retirement of John Sobieski in 1685, through ill health and increasing infirmity, the tide of conquest continued to flow steadily on the Danube and was augmented by new victories on the Mediterranean. In 1685 the duke of Lorraine won back the whole of Turkish Hungary except the fortress of Buda, while Morosini, the hero of Candia, at the head of the Venetian fleet, seized several places on the Albanian coast. The years 1686 and 1687 were still more unfortunate for the Sultan. On the Danube, Buda fell into the hands of Lorraine in September 1686. Pushing back Tököli and his rebel army before him into Transylvania, the imperialist general once more united all Hungary under

The Holy League, 1684.

the Emperor, and left the Hungarian rebels to the tender mercies of Leopold and his Jesuit advisers. In 1687 he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the grand vizier on the historical field of Mohacz and recovered possession of Croatia and Sclavonia. In 1688 he procured the submission of Transylvania and crossing the Danube captured Belgrade and even penetrated as far as Nisch. During the same time Morosini was no less active in the Mediterranean. In 1686 he made himself master of all the chief towns in the Morea. Corinth and Athens next acknowledged his sway, where the Parthenon, which had hitherto survived so many sieges of Romans and barbarians almost unhurt, was hurled into ruins by the explosion of a Venetian bomb. To the spoils of Athens were soon added those of Negropont, Thebes, and Dalmatia, until by 1694 the Turks were stripped of all their posesssions in Greece and on the coast of the Adriatic.

Conquest of Turkish Hungary, 1686.

Conquest of the Morea, 1686.

So continuous a series of misfortunes demanded a victim. In 1688 a palace revolution replaced Mohammed IV. by his brother Suleiman II., and the new Sultan once more intrusted the affairs of the empire to a Kiuprili. Mustafa Kiuprili, the brother of Achmet, showed the vigour of character for which his family were noted. By pursuing a policy of toleration for the Christians and restoring stern discipline to the army, he was soon enabled to bring victory back to the Turkish standards, although he was but two years in his office. In 1690 he recovered Nisch and Belgrade and invaded Hungary, but he was met, defeated, and killed by the margrave of Baden at the battle of Szcelankemen in 1691. With him perished the last chances of the Turks. Although the war continued for eight years with varying success the imperialists and the Venetians never really lost their hold upon Hungary, Transylvania and the Morea. In 1697 prince Eugene won one of the greatest of his victories over Sultan Mustafa II. in person.

Mustafa Kiuprili grand vizier, 1688.

at Zenta, and Peter the Great marked the first serious entrance of Russia into the politics of south-eastern Europe by the capture of Azof. The Sultan realised that with the Kiuprili the possibility of fresh conquests had passed away, and he must content himself with the boundary of the Danube. By the peace of Carlowitz, concluded in January 1699, the Emperor recovered the whole of Hungary, except the district of Temesvar, the larger part of Croatia and Sclavonia, and the suzerainty over Transylvania. Poland retained Podolia, including Kaminiec, and Russia Azof, while the Morea fell to Venice. Thus the Turkish frontier was practically reduced to the Danube, and the seeds of the Eastern Question were sown in the decay of the Ottoman empire and the advance of Russia, and a new epoch in the history of south-eastern Europe began.

The peace of Carlowitz, 1699.

The conquests on the Danube were more permanent than those in the Mediterranean. Fifteen years later the grand vizier, Ali Cumurgi, flushed with an unexpected triumph over the Czar Peter on the Pruth in 1711, and trusting in the exhaustion of the Empire after the war of the Spanish Succession, determined to make a great effort to wipe out the disgrace of Carlowitz, and recover Hungary and the Morea. The Venetians had no longer a hero like Morosini to lead them. The Greek population in spite of the benefits they had received from Venetian administration were too faithless and too dispirited to offer serious opposition. One campaign proved sufficient for the work. In June 1715 Ali Cumurgi passed the isthmus of Corinth. In September he returned in triumph to Constantinople the conqueror of the Morea. But there his success stopped. On the Danube he met more than his match. In August 1716 the Turks were completely defeated by prince Eugene at Peterwardein in Hungary and the grand vizier himself was killed. In 1717 Belgrade again passed into the Emperor's hands, and the road into the heart of the Ottoman empire was open. The Porte saw the necessity of

Reconquest of the Morea, 1715.

peace. By the treaty of Passarovitz signed in 1718 the Turks left Austria in possession of Temesvar and Belgrade but retained the Morea. More than a century was to elapse, and the proud republic of Venice pass herself into slavery, before Greece could win her freedom.

The peace of Passarovitz 1718.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NORTHERN NATIONS FROM THE TREATY OF OLIVA TO THE PEACE OF UTRECHT

1660-1715

The rivalry between Sweden and Brandenburg—Monarchical revolution in Denmark—Weakness of the aristocracy in Sweden—Frederick William makes himself absolute in Prussia, Brandenburg, and Cleves—His policy of centralisation—War between Sweden and Brandenburg—Battle of Fehrbellin—Monarchical revolution in Sweden—The rise of Russia—The reign of Alexis—Regency of Sophia—War with the Turks—Peter the Great becomes absolute ruler—His character and policy—Coalition against Sweden—Career of Charles XII.—His invasion of Russia—Battle of Pultava—The campaign on the Pruth—Treaty of Nystädt—Supremacy of Russia—Reign of Frederick III. of Brandenburg—Frederick recognised as king of Prussia—Condition of the north in 1720.

THE treaties of Oliva and Copenhagen were to the smaller nations grouped round the Baltic, what the peace of Westphalia and the treaties of the Pyrenees were to the great powers of Europe. They not only put an end to a long period of war and disturbance, but also decided the relations of the northern powers to each other for more than half a century. To use the language of a later period they adjusted the balance of power in the north. They mark the end of Danish domination over the Baltic, they mark the beginning of the supremacy of Brandenburg in northern Europe, they mark the first great failure of Sweden to maintain the pride of place gained for her by Gustavus Adolphus. So far the alterations in the relations of the northern powers to each other are clearly

Rivalry between Sweden and Brandenburg.

defined. So far no sense of impending danger from the half barbarous and distracted kingdom of Russia has made itself felt. Until that event happens there is a breathing space in the affairs of the Baltic states for fifty years, and during that time the main questions of interest in their external politics are whether Brandenburg will be able to maintain the supremacy which she has acquired, and whether Sweden will be able to recover the lead which she has lost. The rivalry between Sweden and Denmark is therefore no longer the leading feature of the politics of the Baltic states, the rivalry between Sweden and Russia is still in the womb of futurity, the rivalry between Sweden and Brandenburg remains for the time the only serious question unsettled.

The respite thus gained from foreign war was occupied by all the powers concerned in altering their domestic institutions. The first to move was Denmark. In that country as in Poland the authority of the elected king was completely overshadowed by that of the nobility. They were in possession of political power as well as of social privilege. They owned most of the wealth of the country, paid no taxes, and held all the chief posts in the kingdom. Consequently at each election of a king they were able not only to decide the election, but to make bargains with the elected candidate exceedingly profitable to themselves and burdensome to the rest of the people. There was no country in Europe where the nobles had made themselves so justly hated by all the other classes of the community. National misfortune led naturally to the desire for national revenge. Frederick III. put himself at the head of the movement, and at a meeting of the diet in 1661 successfully carried out a *coup d'état*, with the applause of the clergy, the burghers, and the peasantry. The revolution was entirely in favour of the king. The Crown was made hereditary and transmissible to females as well as to males. The privileges of the nobles were abolished, the capitulation signed by the king on election annulled, and

Monarchical revolution in Denmark.

the government vested in the Crown. At one blow and without bloodshed the monarchy in Denmark was remodelled on the pattern of that of France, and Frederick III. became an absolute king with all the powers of government centralised in himself, and his throne secured by a professional army.

In Sweden matters took a different turn. During the minority of Charles XI., as during the minority of Christina, the administration fell wholly into the hands of the great aristocratic families. Unfortunately there was no Oxenstjerna at their head. The council of regency, under the nominal leadership of the queen-mother, found it necessary to propitiate the nobles in everything. The suicidal policy of making grants of the crown lands to them was again weakly adopted, and the Crown was impoverished while its most dangerous rivals were enriched. The itching palms of the great nobles found in the gold of Louis XIV. the loadstone of their country's policy, and as long as the French supplies lasted Sweden remained true to the French alliance. Once only, like Charles II., in the hope of greater spoils she showed a momentary independence, when she yielded to the persuasions of de Witt, and joined the Triple Alliance. In a few months she returned in penitence to her old allegiance, and when the young king took the reins of government into his own hands in 1672, he found that if eleven years of aristocratical rule had secured for him abroad the friendship and support of the greatest prince in Europe, it had made him the heir at home to an empty treasury and a discredited administration.

Misgovernment of the nobles in Sweden.

While Sweden was falling into bankruptcy, and was being threatened with disruption, Frederick William of Brandenburg was diligently employing the time in making his authority over his various dominions absolute and unquestioned. He had already succeeded in reducing the diets of Brandenburg and Cleves to impotence, and organising an administration dependent on himself alone outside the scope of their interference. But in

Despotic policy of the Great Elector in Prussia.

Prussia the task was far more difficult, and directly the treaty of Oliva was signed he applied himself seriously to the business. Under the suzerainty of Poland the nobles and burghers of Prussia had been accustomed to exercise a considerable amount of independence, but now that the Great Elector had been recognised as immediate sovereign over Prussia by the treaties of Wehlau and of Oliva, both sides understood that the old relations between the duke and his subjects would have to be modified. The Prussian diet determined to yield as little as possible. It refused to ratify the treaty, it drew up a constitution to secure its own authority. By the treaty Frederick William only succeeded to the same rights over Prussia which Poland had enjoyed, *i.e.* those of a feudal suzerain, but he was determined if possible to make himself absolute sovereign, and reduce the diet to insignificance. Most foolishly the diet played into his hands. The two parties of which it was composed, the landed gentry and the burghers, quarrelled over the nature of a tax which was to be imposed. Each side wanted the other to bear the burden, and Frederick William was enabled, under cover of settling the dispute, to march troops into Königsberg, and arrest Rhode, the leader of the burgher party, in 1662. This display of determination awed the burghers into submission, but the nobles and the landed gentry still remained to be dealt with. Led by Kalkstein, and secretly favoured by Poland, they were too strong to be crushed.

Frederick William had recourse to the arts of diplomacy and dissimulation of which he was so consummate a master. In 1663 the diet accepted at his hands a charter which defined its rights. It was expressed in ample but vague phraseology. By it the Great Elector agreed that his own powers of government should be only those formerly enjoyed by himself and the king of Poland, that the diet should be summoned at least once in six years, and should be consulted in all important business, and that no new taxes should be imposed without its consent. But by the very definition of

The Charter of 1663.

its powers the diet lost all which was not expressed, while the elector gained all that was not refused. The balance of authority in the state had clearly shifted from the diet to the elector. Frederick William had only to avoid for a few years giving the diet the opportunity of exercising the rights secured to it, while the authority of his own administrative officers was being established, and he need no longer fear the diet when it did meet, than the kings of France need fear the States-General. It might be troublesome but it could not be dangerous. So gradually by thrifty management and careful policy Frederick William succeeded in extending his personal authority more and more over the country, until in 1672 he felt himself strong enough to strike a final blow. Kalkstein, the head and front of the opposition to him, had been banished to his estates for treasonable correspondence with Poland in 1669, but breaking his parole he escaped across the frontier to Warsaw. Frederick William demanded his surrender from the king of Poland, but it was refused. Taking the law into his own hands, he had him arrested on Polish ground, brought to Memel, and there beheaded. A more flagrant breach of the rights of nations could not have been conceived, but the Great Elector well knew it could not fail to be successful, and with him success justified everything. Poland was in no condition to declare war, and the death of Kalkstein was the one thing wanted to make the submission of Prussia complete.

Execution of Kalkstein.

By these measures Frederick William succeeded in crushing all open opposition to his will over the whole of his incongruous dominions. In Cleves and in Prussia, as in Pomerania and Brandenburg, he was the centre and the mainspring of government. There was no local or constitutional authority which could legally claim superiority to him, or practically exercise equality with him. But though he was the supreme power in the state he had not yet gained absolute power over the state. There were still many local bodies of

Establishment of personal government by the Great Elector.

advice and administration, with well-ascertained powers, whose assistance was necessary to him in carrying his will into effect, though they had no right to dictate to him the policy which he was to pursue. He had given to his state political unity, he had gained for himself and his successors political independence, he had won for himself and his family within his own dominions political leadership, but he had not as yet established administrative uniformity. That was necessarily a work of slow growth, of a century rather than a lifetime. It was not completed till the days of Frederick William I. and Frederick the Great, but it was begun by the Great Elector. The important department of patronage he at once took under his personal control, and appointed all the chief administrative officers in his various dominions. As head of the army, he separated the military from the civil revenues, and placed the former entirely under the management of the minister of war, who was of course his own nominee. War expenditure was thus wholly removed from the control of the civil authorities, and the army was organised on a professional basis. By a series of ordinances he established an elaborate system of social distinctions and privileges, which tended to centralise society under him, and attach the nobles to him by social distinction now that he had deprived them of political power. In these ways the government of Brandenburg-Prussia received from him that military and aristocratic character which its greater prosperity has only increased.

Frederick William was also by no means unmindful of the general welfare of his people. The constant want of money under which he laboured, was in itself enough to draw his attention to the fact, that the real weakness of his power lay in the sterile and poverty-stricken state of his country. To improve this, he set an excellent example of economy in the wise and careful management of his own domains, he promoted numerous schemes of industrial and commercial enterprise,

Encouragement of trade and manufactures.

and he cordially welcomed the Huguenot exiles from France, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, who brought into Brandenburg many of the finer manufactures, of which France had for some time had the monopoly.

This policy of steady but quiet centralisation and industrial development was rudely interrupted by the war of aggression undertaken by Louis XIV. against the Dutch. Frederick William was closely connected with the Dutch by marriage and by trade interests, and was one of the first of European sovereigns to draw the sword in their favour in 1673. Beaten hopelessly in the field by Turenne, he was obliged to withdraw from the struggle six months after he had declared war; but in the next year the increasing difficulties of Louis emboldened him again to enter the field. Louis, however, was prepared for this move, and the presence of 16,000 Brandenburgers on the Rhine was the signal of the advance of Charles XI. with a Swedish army on the road to Berlin. Frederick William at once hastened back to defend his capital, reached the Elbe in June 1675, and, dashing forward his cavalry between the two divisions of the Swedish army, seized Rathenow, and prevented their junction on the Havel. To do this he had been forced to leave the bulk of his infantry behind. Nevertheless, with the brilliance of decision which marks a great general, he determined to throw himself with the few troops which he had with him upon the Swedish column, which was retreating from Brandenburg, before they reached the pass of Fehrbellin. Pursuing them by forced marches, he came up with their rear-guard on the 17th of June, and on the 18th forced them to accept battle. The weight of numbers was sadly against him. He had but 6000 men against double the number of his enemies, but the Swedes were dispirited, and the elector, in spite of the advice of his generals, insisted on the attack. The battle was hotly contested, but Frederick William had the better position and the more effective artillery, and by nightfall

War with Sweden, 1674.

Battle of Fehrbellin, 1675.

a counter-charge, promptly delivered, carried destruction into the ranks of the enemy. They broke and fled in complete rout through the pass. The day of Fehrbellin is the first great victory of the power of Brandenburg-Prussia, the first step in the ladder which has led to Sadowa and Sedan. It is also the death-day of the military prestige of the Swedes in Europe. From the battle of Lützen to the battle of Fehrbellin, they had never been defeated except by superior numbers. They were now seen not to be able to hold their own with Brandenburg, for Fehrbellin was no isolated victory. The elector pushed on into Swedish Pomerania, victorious and almost unchallenged,—Wohlgart, Stettin, Stralsund and Greifswald fell successively into his hands. By October 1678 Sweden held not a foot of territory in Pomerania. Had it not been for her potent ally at Paris, the work of Gustavus Adolphus and of Oxenstjerna would have been completely undone long before the close of the century, and Frederick William would have been admittedly the master of the north. But Louis XIV. insisted upon the full restoration to Sweden of all which she had lost as the price of peace, and the Great Elector had to sign the treaty of S. Germain en Laye in June 1679, by which France evacuated Cleves, which she had occupied and paid to Brandenburg the sum of 300,000 crowns, while Brandenburg restored to Sweden all her conquests in Pomerania, except a small strip of land on the Oder.

Treaty of S. Germain en Laye, 1679.

Sweden thus emerged from an unsuccessful and mismanaged war, without payment of indemnity or substantial loss of territory. As things turned out she proved to be the gainer rather than the loser for her misfortunes, for they enabled her to rid herself of her incapable aristocratical government. Charles XI. did for Sweden what Frederick III. had done for Denmark. Taking advantage of the unpopularity of the government, he effected a revolution in favour of the Crown without difficulty. With the help of the clergy and the people

Monarchical revolution in Sweden.

the royal power was made absolute, and the domain lands, which the nobles had divided among themselves, were ordered to be restored. This destroyed at a blow a large part of the wealth of the noble class, and reduced them to a position of dependence upon the Crown. Charles proved himself worthy of the responsibility which he had undertaken. Until his death in 1697 Sweden was at peace, commerce revived, the abuses of the administration were rooted out, and the government carried on without the assistance of French subsidies. For eighteen years tranquillity reigned on the shores of the Baltic. The Great Elector and his son Frederick III. were busy with schemes of internal reform and personal aggrandisement. Denmark under Christian V. was mainly occupied with the pleasures and extravagances of a courtly magnificence, while Sweden was recovering from the evils of administration, brought about by the corrupt rule of the nobles during the king's minority. The interest of the politics of the Baltic veers further north, where behind the swamps of the Neva and the Dniester the barbaric power of Russia was preparing to enter upon the stage of the civilised world.

Condition of Russia.

Russia is the last-born child of European civilisation. While the nations of the west were painfully hammering out their culture and their polity, under the leadership of the Church, in the school of feudalism, through the inspiration of Roman law, the thinly populated expanse of forest and morass, which stretches between the Baltic and the Ural mountains was subject to Tartar rule and made no claim to civilised life. Even Christianity, which might under happier circumstances have become a bond of union between the backward north and the cultured south, proved rather a hindrance than a help, on account of the enmity between the East and the West. As long as Constantinople stood, Moscow was its disciple and its ally; when Constantinople fell, Moscow claimed to be its heir, and its avenger. It was not till the days of Ivan the Terrible in the sixteenth century that the domination

Ivan the Terrible.

of the Tartar was overthrown, and Russia began to be a nation and to enter into relations with other nations. Its prosperity was short-lived. Hardly had the breath left the body of the savage autocrat in 1584, than a period of anarchy and misery began, which has left its mark upon the country in the legal establishment of serfdom, and was only ended by the accession of the Romanoff dynasty to the throne in 1612.

The troublous times.

Michael, the first of that ill-fated house, could do little more than repress the elements of disorder, and restore the authority of the Czar, but so well was this work done, that he was enabled to hand on to his son Alexis, on his death in 1645, a crown which was at once popular secure and despotic. Two dangers only threatened the infant state; one from the turbulent spirit of the local nobles, the boyárs, the other from the physical power wielded by the national guard, called the Streltsi, who played the part of the Prætorian guard, or the Janizaries, of the court of Moscow, and were always as ready to intimidate as to protect their sovereign. In the earlier years of the reign of Alexis, however, all went well. In 1648 he began the march of Russia towards the south-east of Europe by assuming the protectorate of the Cossacks of the Ukraine, then in revolt against Poland, and succeeded in obtaining legal sanction for the absolute autocracy of the Czar, by the passing of a code, or constitution, which concentrated all the powers of the state in his hands. By these two measures, which established the internal polity of Russia, and indicated the direction of her foreign policy, Alexis may with some justice claim to have been the real founder of the greatness of his country. Unfortunately a change soon took place. The weak and amiable Czar fell quickly into the hands of courtiers and favourites. Corruption and faction asserted themselves among the boyárs. The government became disorganised. Sedition broke out in the chief towns, and more than once Alexis had to sacrifice his ministers to

Michael Romanoff.

Reign of Alexis.

the fury of the populace, in order to save his own life. Even the Church was split into two by an ill-managed effort to revise the antiquated service-books, and the evils of ecclesiastical schism and religious persecution were added to those of domestic strife.

Such was the condition of Russia when the Czar Alexis died suddenly in 1676, leaving behind him by his first marriage two sons, Theodore and Ivan, both extremely delicate in health; and one sturdy little boy of four years of age, named Peter, by his second wife Natalia Naryshkin, whom he had married in 1669. The death of Alexis was the signal for the outbreak of a series of palace revolutions, which afflicted the unfortunate country for some years. The Naryshkins, who had absorbed all places of profit and influence during the later years of Alexis, were banished at the accession of Theodore in 1676, but on the death of that prince without children in 1682 they came back to power, and with the assistance of the boyárs were able to procure the recognition of the young Peter as Czar, in exclusion of his elder brother Ivan, who was physically deformed and intellectually incapable. An act so high-handed naturally created many enemies. The opposition party among the nobles called in the aid of the Streltsi, espoused their grievances, fanned their discontent, and, persuading them that the life of Ivan was in danger hurled them suddenly in riotous fury against the palace, in May 1682. The Naryshkins were murdered. Ivan was proclaimed Czar in company with his brother Peter, and the princess Sophia, the most capable of his sisters, was made regent during the infancy of the Czars. The regency lasted for seven years. During that time the real power was in the hands of prince Basil Golitsin, the head of one of the oldest of the noble families of Russia, and the acknowledged lover of the princess Sophia. His talent however proved unequal to his opportunities. In 1686 a definitive peace with Poland, called the treaty of Eternal

Reign of Theodore I.

Recognition of Peter as Czar, 1682.

Revolt of the Streltsi.

Regency of Sophia.

Peace, put a finishing touch to the truce brought about by the treaty of Andrusoff in 1667, on terms which secured the important town of Kief to Russia, but obliged her to join the Emperor and the Poles in their efforts to beat back the Ottoman Turks. In consequence of this pledge, Golitsin waged two campaigns against the Tartars of the Crimea, who were subjects of the Porte, in 1687 and 1689, the unsuccessful issue of which filled up to overflowing the cup of hatred which was preparing for him. Peter allowed himself to be put at the head of the opposition. On September 17th, 1689, the regency came to an end. The princess Sophia was sent to a convent, prince Basil Golitsin banished to an obscure village in the inaccessible north, and the government fell into the hands of the rival aristocratic faction.

At the age of seventeen, in the year when William III. made himself master of Great Britain, and the war of the league of Augsburg really began, Peter the Great became nominally the head of the government of Russia. In reality he exercised but little influence upon the fortunes of his country for some years. He was as yet but a boy, brimming over with health and spirits, exulting in the physical enjoyment of life, supremely happy when he could get away from the wearisome routine of the palace to his forge and his carpenter's shop, or his ship-building yards at Pereyaslavl and Archangel. The demon of ambition had not yet waked in his breast, and his ships and his military sham fights, like his displays of fireworks and his theatricals, were the amusements of a spoilt child's fancy, rather than the materials of a man's policy. The rude touch of actual war quickly brought about a change. In 1695 the government determined to revive the slumbering war with the Turks, and attack the port of Azof on the Black Sea. Peter threw himself into the scheme with characteristic impetuosity, worked as a bombardier in the army like a common soldier, and took his place as Czar

Peter becomes the head of the government, 1689.

War with the Turks, 1695.

in the councils of the generals. But the result was unfortunate. Partly through sheer bad management, partly through the inexperience and impulsiveness of the Czar, the attack on the fortress completely failed, and the Russian army had to retreat as best it could across the frozen steppes amid great privations. But Peter was one of those who learn best by experience. The campaign taught him the necessity of forethought and preparation. Next year all was different. A flotilla of boats, constructed especially for the river service at Voronezh, occupied the mouths of the Don under Peter's own orders, and prevented the Turks from relieving Azof from the sea; while the engineering works on land were pushed on by General Gordon. On July 29th 1696 a general assault was ordered, but the Turks seeing that the town was no longer tenable surrendered, and Peter found himself to his great joy the master of a port on the Black Sea. The capture of Azof is the turning-point in the life of Peter the Great. His imagination was fired by the opportunities opened out to his country by the possession of an outlet for her commerce and a harbour for her fleet in southern waters. The death of his brother Ivan without male heirs in February left him undisputed master of his vast dominions. From that moment he bent all the energies of his powerful intellect and iron will to the service of Russia. He took the reins of government into his own hands, and, without regard to precedent, to tradition, to public or private right, he drove the chariot of the state straight towards the goal of his own ambition, and his country's greatness.

Character of Peter the Great.

Peter himself was well fitted to become the hero of such a policy. His friendship with Gordon and Lefort and others of the foreign residents at Moscow had taught him how far Russia lagged behind all other European countries in the march of civilisation. His quick wit showed him that he must organise his country on the European model, and make it formidable by its army and navy to its enemies, and useful by its

resources to its friends, before it could be admitted into the brotherhood of European nations. To change the institutions and overthrow the traditions of a country like Russia was a revolution, but Peter was not the man to shrink back appalled at the consequences, when he had once made up his mind to act. Sunny jovial and open-hearted under ordinary circumstances, in the presence of opposition, when his blood was up, he became a fiend incarnate. No savage could be more cruel, no tyrant more brutal, no criminal more lustful and drunken. He knew not what it was to accept a rebuff, or deny himself a desire. To incur his suspicion was torture, to thwart his will was death. After the revolt of the Streltsi in 1698 more than a thousand men were put to death and eighteen hundred tortured by the knout and roasted at the fire, many of them in the presence of the Czar himself. He allowed his eldest son Alexis to be knouted to death in 1718, and personally superintended the torture of many of his alleged accomplices. His drunken orgies lasted for days, and were worthy only of Comus and his crew. Yet with all this hateful savagery there was much that was attractive about Peter. When free from his fits of depression, there was a buoyancy and vivacity of intellect, which, combined with singular simplicity of thought, made him a most delightful companion. No one could be a truer friend, if no one could be a more brutal enemy. He was perfectly natural. If there was much of the barbarian about him, there was nothing of the schemer. He was free from the civilised vices of deceit and double dealing. Rough, honest, and quick-tempered, he moved through society like a lion cub among pet dogs, dangerous but noble.

His two years of foreign travel enabled him to see with his own eyes the advantages of European civilisation and government, and to learn how to make with his own hands the ships which were to spread the greatness of the Russian name round the shores of the Black Sea. Neither lesson was thrown away.

Objects of his home government.

Directly he got back to Russia he began to foster everything western at the expense of everything national. He introduced western dress, western habits, western dancing, and even western shaving. He encouraged the settlement of foreigners, and spent a good deal of his time in the German suburb of Moscow with his foreign friends. Directly he obtained possession of the mouth of the Neva, he built his new capital S. Petersburg, to take the place of conservative and traditional Moscow, as the centre of his new polity. At the same time he took good care to make the foundations of his government secure. The revolt of the Streltsi in 1698 gave him the opportunity of abolishing a force, which was too much mixed up with the old aristocracy of Russia ever to be really loyal to the new regime, and to replace them by a professional army trained on the European model under foreign officers. He tried as much as possible to depress the power of the boyárs, surrounding himself with friends and ministers like Menschikoff, who were drawn from a lower class of society. So successful was this policy that in 1711 he felt himself able to bring the political power of the boyárs to an end by forbidding their council to meet any longer. With a similar object he refused to nominate a successor to the patriarch Adrian on his death in 1700, but placed the powers of the patriarchate in the hands of a commission, afterwards called the Holy Governing Synod, which brought the affairs of the Church more definitely under his own control.

His foreign policy.

While Peter was thus engaged in winding the chains of despotism more tightly round the necks of his subjects at home, he was equally busy in trying to extend the frontiers of Russia to the sea, at the expense of his neighbours abroad. No one could doubt that the first essential of the due development of Russia was to obtain a footing upon the Baltic. The port of Archangel on the frozen White Sea, and the port of Azof on the Black Sea, closed as it was to the trade of the Mediterranean by the straits of the Bosphorus

and the Dardanelles in the hands of the Turks, were not sufficient to enable Russia to expand into a commercial nation. But since the treaties of Stolbovo and Kardis, renewed as late as 1684 by the princess Sophia, Russia had acquiesced in the annexation of the Baltic lands by Sweden, and it was certain that Sweden would not tamely surrender her treaty rights. But in the year 1697 an opportunity offered, which was too tempting for Peter's slender stock of virtue to resist. Charles XI. of Sweden died, leaving as his heir and successor his youthful son Charles XII., only fifteen years of age. Patkul, a nobleman of Livonia, who was eager to restore the independence of his country, applied to Denmark, Poland, and Russia, the hereditary enemies of Sweden, for assistance. Each power, thinking only of its own aggrandisement, caught willingly at the chance of crushing Sweden when she was weak, and in 1699 this nefarious alliance was concluded, in which the independence of Livonia was used merely to cloak a policy of pure aggression.

Coalition against Sweden, 1699.

But the allies soon found that they had reckoned without their host. Charles XII. of Sweden was one of those rare spirits who are born with a perfect genius for fighting. Without any gifts as a strategist, without any studied knowledge of the art of war, he was a born fighter. He loved fighting for fighting's sake. He was never happier than when on campaign. He enjoyed the very hardships of war, and every soldier in his army knew that whatever might be his own privations, his king was sharing them all. With an unlimited belief in his own fortunes he succeeded in making every one else believe in them too. The enthusiasm of his army was unbounded. They willingly rendered to him an unquestioning obedience, and followed him gladly wherever he pointed the way. A man with such gifts was not going to wait until his unwieldy antagonists had united their forces. Early in May 1700 he sailed straight to Copenhagen and ended the Danish war at a blow. Frederick IV. could not defend his capital,

Defeat of the allies by Charles XII.

and was obliged to accept the mediation of England and Holland, and to conclude the treaty of Travendal, by which he withdrew from the alliance with Poland and Russia. Leaving Denmark, Charles sailed to the Gulf of Finland where Peter was besieging the important fortress of Narva. Although he had only some 8000 men against Peter's 60,000 Russians, he did not hesitate to order an attack. The huge undisciplined masses of Peter's army were quickly thrown into confusion, and fled panic-stricken to their own country, leaving Charles the undisputed master of the Baltic coast. Turning southwards the Swedish king marched through Livonia and Courland into Poland, occupied Warsaw in 1702, defeated the king, Augustus the Strong of Saxony, who had been elected to the Polish crown on the death of John Sobieski in 1697, at the battle of Clissow, and drove him into Saxony. In 1703 he captured Thorn and Dantzig, procured the deposition of Augustus in an assembly held at Warsaw in February 1704, and imposed Stanislas Leczinski upon the Poles as king in his stead. He then resumed his course of military triumph, overran Lithuania, driving out the Russians in 1705, defeated Schulenberg at Frauenstadt in 1706, and finally invaded Saxony in 1707, where he forced Augustus to conclude the peace of Altranstadt in the September of that year, by which Stanislas Leczinski was recognised as king of Poland, and the unfortunate Patkul was surrendered as a victim to the cruelty of Charles, who, in defiance of every principle of humanity, had him broken on the wheel as a traitor.

Position of Charles XII. 1708.

When Charles XII. rested at Altranstadt in the winter of 1707-8, at the age of twenty-five, he felt himself with reason to be the wonder of the world. He was courted on all sides by the great powers, at that time distracted by the throes of the war of the Spanish Succession, and had he cared to play the rôle, might have posed as the arbiter of Europe. From Versailles came one of the most trusted diplomatists of Louis XIV.,

to remind the young prince of the long friendship of Sweden and France, and to entreat him to acknowledge the benefits of S. Germain en Laye by drawing his sword manfully for Louis at the crisis of his fate. But on behalf of the allies there appeared at the court of Charles metal still more attractive. Marlborough, the greatest soldier of the age, came personally to Altranstadt to plead the cause of Europe before Charles, with the laurels of Blenheim and of Ramillies still green upon his brow. His task was the easier one. He wanted not the assistance but the neutrality of Sweden. Charles was flattered by the attention paid to him, fascinated by the address of the hero diplomatist, and lent a willing ear to his suggestions. His Protestantism rejected the idea of an alliance with the author of the 'dragonades.' His desire for vengeance impelled him to come to close quarters with his enemy in the north. His soldierly pride shrank from committing himself to a war in which he would have to take a subordinate place. So in the spring of 1708 he turned his back deliberately on Germany and the Rhine, and marched to his ruin in the inhospitable north.

While Charles had been engaged in the conquest of Poland and Saxony, Peter had well employed the breathing space allowed to him in the diligent training of his undisciplined armies, and the occupation of the Baltic sea-coast on either side of the Neva. He had already overrun Ingria and Carelia, and had begun the fortifications and houses of a town at the mouth of the Neva, which was one day to be his capital city. Charles did not disturb himself over trifles of that sort. He struck, as was his wont, straight at the heart of his enemies' power, and having made an alliance with Mazeppa, a hetman of the Cossacks, who promised to join him with a large force of those questionable allies, marched straight upon Moscow at the head of 30,000 men. Misfortune dogged his steps from the first. The roads were incalculably bad, the weather unexpectedly severe, progress was hopelessly slow. When no news had been

His invasion of Russia.

heard of Mazeppa for some time, Charles, in order to try and open communications with him, left the main track, and plunged into the expanses of forest and morass which lie between Little Russia and the Ukraine. Winter surprised him on the march when he was still many hundreds of miles from Moscow. Food and supplies became very difficult to procure. Disease ravaged his army. Still with the courage of despair he pushed on. Spring found him exhausted but with his face still set towards Moscow. He was destined never to see it. Peter, at the head of immensely superior forces, fell upon Levenhaupt who was bringing a convoy to his aid and cut him to pieces. Eventually he came up with the king himself at Pultava in the month of June 1709. The defeat of Narva was quickly avenged. Surrounded by the Russian forces, outnumbered two to one, the Swedes could only sell their lives dearly. Twenty thousand officers and men surrendered. Charles himself wounded in the foot made his way with a few companions across the frontier and took refuge with the Turks. The dream of his ambition was shattered at a blow, the work of Gustavus Adolphus was finally overthrown. Livonia and Esthonia with the important towns of Riga and Revel fell into the hands of the Czar. Russia made good her hold upon the Baltic, and took the place of Sweden as the leading power of the north.

Battle of Pultava, 1709.

The battle of Pultava, if it destroyed the power of Sweden, did not put an end to the war. Charles XII., from his refuge at Bender on Turkish soil, tried to stir up his hosts to take his part and declare war against Russia. Peter himself, flushed with triumph and ever steady to the policy of enlarging the sea boundary of his country, was by no means averse to the idea of driving back the Turkish empire from the Dniester to the Danube. The intense religious spirit of the Russians, always a potent factor in the policy of Russia in the East, impelled the Czar to put himself forward as the liberator of the oppressed Christians of Moldavia and Wallachia. But

War between Russia and the Turks, 1711.

he was too wary to take the first step. After much hesitation the Sultan made up his mind. Urged on by his fear of seeing a Russian fleet in the Black Sea, he declared war against Peter in 1710, and the next year saw the Czar at the head of a large army on the Pruth. Fortune however now declared against him. By sheer bad management Peter contrived to get his army completely hemmed in between the river, the marshes, and the Turkish army, and was completely at the mercy of his enemies. Luckily for him the grand vizier was willing to treat for peace, and Peter was enabled to save himself and his army from an ignominious surrender, by giving back to the Turks the port of Azof, and destroying all Russian fortresses on Turkish territory. Charles XII. was sent back to his own dominions, which he found threatened from all sides by the Russians, the Danes and the Poles. For seven years he struggled in vain against superior forces abroad, and the disaffection of the nobles at home. By 1716 he had lost every acre of German soil. In 1718 a bullet shot by one of his own men terminated his career as he was besieging the fortress of Friedrickshall in Norway. The death of Charles XII. put an end to many intrigues, and made the restoration of a general peace more easy. Sweden had learned the lesson which her king had refused to learn. By a succession of treaties, which culminated in the peace of Nystädt between Sweden and Russia in 1720, Hanover became the possessor of Bremen and Verden; Augustus of Saxony was recognised as the rightful king of Poland, Prussia obtained part of Swedish Pomerania, with the islands of Usedom and Rugen, and the towns of Stettin and Dantzig; Frederick of Denmark was permitted to annex the duchy of Schleswig, but had to restore the rest of his conquests and possessions to Sweden, while Russia, the largest gainer of all, obtained Ingria, Esthonia, Livonia, and part of Carelia, and promised to surrender Finland.

Pacification of the North, 1720.

While Russia was engaged in claiming the supremacy of the north at the hands of Sweden, Brandenburg-Prussia was

pursuing a policy of steady and quiet growth under her undistinguished ruler. It was the business of Frederick III. to consolidate what the Great Elector had won. Under him national prosperity quickly increased in a land which was no longer the theatre of war. The court became more splendid, roads and canals more numerous, manufactories more active, while the foundation of the university of Halle in 1694 marks a distinct advance in German culture. In foreign affairs he adhered steadily to the policy of his father, and sent his contingent of sturdy Brandenburgers to the assistance of the League of Augsburg with praiseworthy regularity. But the treaty of Ryswick contributed nothing either to his dignity or his possessions, and Frederick, profoundly dissatisfied, proclaimed aloud that if the great powers wanted his aid again he should exact his reward beforehand. In two years' time the opportunity came, and Frederick, true to his word, insisted on the title of king, as the condition of supporting the Emperor in the matter of the partition treaties in 1700. It was some time before Leopold gave way. The thought of a kingdom in north Germany within the limits of the Empire itself was hateful to him, and opposed to the traditions of the Empire. He would have preferred to diminish, rather than to augment, the dignity and influence of the House of Hohenzollern. But necessity knows no law. Leopold wanted the aid of the Brandenburgers in the field, and could get them on no other terms. To save appearances it was arranged that Frederick should take his title from Prussia, which lay outside the German Empire, and accordingly in the year 1700 Frederick III. elector of Brandenburg, became Frederick I. king of Prussia. In the following year the Grand Alliance was set on foot, and the allied powers all recognised the new king in order to gain his help. Frederick fulfilled his part of the bargain faithfully enough. As long as the war lasted the Prussians fought steadily and well on the side of the allies, and the peace of Utrecht set the stamp of an international treaty

Creation of the kingdom of Prussia, 1700.

to the newly made dignity, besides giving to Prussia the more substantial endowment of Spanish Guelderland.

The treaties of Utrecht and Nystädt, like those of Carlovitz and Passarovitz, mark the end of one epoch and the beginning of another. The history of northern Europe in the seventeenth century is the history of the effort of Sweden to obtain mastery over the Baltic and a footing in Germany; of the successful assertion by Brandenburg of leadership in north Germany; of the birth of Russia as a serious political power. Those questions, fought over so strenuously during the seventeenth century, received their final answer in the great treaties which usher in the next epoch. Sweden, stricken from her place of vantage, deprived of nearly all her German possessions, relegated to her own side of the Baltic, is dismissed into the obscurity of a third-rate power, from which she had been originally raised only by the quarrels of her antagonists, and the unprecedented personal ability of her sovereigns. Prussia, acknowledged as an equal by the monarchies of Europe, stands forth without rival as the unquestioned leader of the northern Germany, and is biding her time until the hour shall strike, which will permit her to wrest from the House of Habsburg the leadership of the German people, and inherit from it the duty of defending the German Fatherland. In the far north Russia, under its savage but capable ruler, has made her voice heard among the councils of Europe. Seated firmly on the eastern shores of the Baltic, she is bent on making herself into a commercial and maritime power, while in the far south-east corner of her empire, policy has already pointed the way along which her destiny must move. After the conquest of Azof in 1696, after the campaign on the Pruth in 1711, Turkey and Russia stand face to face in south-eastern Europe, and the Eastern Question has begun.

Northern Europe at the end of the century.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PARTITION TREATIES AND THE GRAND ALLIANCE

The question of the Spanish succession—The claims of the candidates—Legal and political difficulties of the problem—Importance of the interests involved—The Partition Treaty of 1668—Adoption by Louis of a policy of partition in 1698—Suspicions of William and Heinsius—Objects of Louis, William, and Heinsius—The first Partition Treaty—Death of the Electoral Prince—The negotiations continued—The second Partition Treaty—Advantages of the treaty to France and the maritime powers—Acceptance of the treaty in Europe—Attitude of the Emperor and Savoy—The struggle round the death-bed of Charles II.—The will in favour of France—Acceptance of the will by Louis—Political reasons for his conduct—His deliberate breach of faith—His policy purely opportunist—Its momentary success—Aggressive conduct of Louis—The formation of the Grand Alliance.

Question of the Spanish Succession.

EVER since the death of Philip IV. of Spain in 1666, Europe had lived under the shadow of an impending catastrophe. Charles II. was the last male representative of the Habsburgs of Spain. Weak in body, and imbecile in mind, he could neither bear the burden of a great empire himself nor hand it on to a child to bear it after him. Married first to Louise of Orléans, and on her death to a German princess, Marie of Neuburg, the blessing of an heir was denied to him; and all Europe knew well that when he died the great powers would wrangle over his dominions like a pack of wolves round the carcase of an ox. The question of the succession to the crown of Spain was one which required the highest powers of statesmanship for its solution. It was complicated by the nicest points of European policy, of international law, and of public and private

honour. Practically there were three claimants whose rights were undeniably superior to those of any one else, the House of Bourbon, the House of Habsburg, and the Bavarian house of Wittelbach. In default of heirs to the reigning king, Charles II., the inheritance, according to the usual rules of legitimate succession, would go to his sisters, the only other children of Philip IV.[1] Of them, the elder, Maria Theresa, had married Louis XIV. of France, and their eldest son, the Dauphin, was accordingly the rightful heir of the crown of Spain by descent. But by a special provision of the treaty of the Pyrenees Maria Theresa, in consideration of a dower of 500,000 crowns, covenanted to be paid her by her father Philip IV., had expressly renounced all claims for herself or her descendants upon the throne of Spain. So, if this renunciation was valid, the Dauphin, though heir by descent, would be excluded from the inheritance by international law. But on behalf of the Dauphin it was argued with some force that as the dower of 500,000 crowns had never been paid by Philip IV., the renunciation, which was expressed to have been made in consideration of it, fell to the ground and was of no effect.

Claim of the Dauphin.

The younger daughter of Philip IV., Margaret Theresa, had married the Emperor Leopold I.; but the only issue of that marriage was a daughter, Maria Antonia, who married Max Emanuel, the elector of Bavaria. They had a son, Joseph Ferdinand, generally known as the Electoral Prince, who became accordingly the representative of the rights of Margaret Theresa by descent. But in his way, as in that of the Dauphin, there was a difficulty of international law. Maria Antonia had on her marriage with the elector of Bavaria expressly renounced her claims on the Spanish inheritance, and thus shut out her son legally from the succession.

Claim of the Electoral Prince.

If Charles II. had no child, and his two sisters had renounced their claims, it was clear that there was no descendant of

[1] See Appendix IV. p. 381.

Philip IV. who could make out a valid title by descent and law. Recourse must be had to the descendants of Philip III. Here again the question lay between two sisters, for Philip IV. was the only son. The elder daughter of Philip III. was Anne of Austria, the wife of Louis XIII. and the mother of Louis XIV. of France, but she, like her niece Maria Theresa, had expressly renounced her claims to the crown of Spain upon her marriage. The younger daughter, Maria, had married the Emperor Ferdinand III., and was therefore the mother of the Emperor Leopold I., who was the living representative of her rights. She had made no renunciation whatever, and the Emperor Leopold accordingly maintained that by the combined effect of descent and law he and he alone was the rightful inheritor of the Spanish monarchy. But Leopold was much too sensible to dream for a moment that Europe would permit the resuscitation of the empire of Charles V., just as Louis XIV. was too sensible to dream of uniting the crowns of France and Spain upon the same head, and he passed on his rights to his second son the archduke Charles, just as Louis and the Dauphin passed on theirs to the second son of the Dauphin, Philip duke of Anjou.

Claim of the Emperor.

A more difficult problem has rarely presented itself to statesmen. The simplest solution no doubt was to be found in the purely legal view of the matter taken by the Emperor Leopold. The renunciations had been legally made, and they must be considered legally valid, otherwise there was no sure basis of procedure at all. But whatever force might be attributed to an argument of this sort with reference to the renunciations of Anne of Austria and Maria Theresa, it was very difficult to admit its validity in the case of Maria Antonia, and permit a father to profit by a renunciation, which he himself had imposed upon his own daughter in her extreme youth and in contemplation of marriage. Yet how could any one maintain the invalidity of the renunciation of Maria Antonia on account of parental

Legal difficulties of the question.

influence, and the validity of that of Maria Theresa, when it was an admitted fact that the consideration for the latter, *i.e.* the dowry, had never been paid? But then, if the renunciations were to be considered invalid, there was no question as to the right of the Dauphin to the whole succession, and Europe would find itself face to face with a danger far greater than the resuscitation of the empire of Charles v.

Political difficulties.

Below the purely legal aspect of the matter there was felt to be a momentous European question. Spain had been permitted to retain her vast and splendid dominions, because she was daily becoming weaker and more effete. The long-drawn agony of the Spanish monarchy exactly suited the plans of European statesmen, as long as Europe was in a state of transition. When the chief powers were fighting among themselves for the Low Countries and the Rhine, for the lower Danube and the Baltic, it was highly convenient that problems so grave should not be further complicated by questions of South American trade, and access to the Mediterranean. All Europe was content to leave the monopolies of Spain alone, because Spain was unable to utilise them. But towards the end of the century this feeling was passing away, and the prizes which Spain continued to hold but did not know how to use, were being eagerly and avariciously eyed from two quite different quarters. The 'maritime nations,' as they were called in the language of diplomacy, England and Holland, since the revolution of 1688, had succeeded in establishing on the firm basis of a close mutual alliance the superiority of their commerce to that of France. Already they shared between them the trade of the Baltic, of North America, and of the East. But from two quarters of the world they were shut out. The policy of Spain excluded them from a share in the trade with the Spanish Indies, and especially from the lucrative commerce in negroes, which was becoming of greater importance every day in those islands and districts of central America where white labour was an impossibility. The want of a harbour and naval station in

the Mediterranean placed their commerce with the Levant at the mercy of pirates, and dependent on the goodwill of the southern powers. At the same time the policy of the House of Habsburg, since the peace of Westphalia, had been tending more and more in the direction of trying to secure a hold upon north Italy. While national interest and the course of events had been pushing the Austrian power further and further down the Danube at the expense of the Turks, the dynastic and personal policy of the Emperors had been rather directed to the gain of compensation upon the Po for what they had lost upon the Rhine.

Importance of the European interests involved.

It was clear then that the question of the succession to the crown of Spain could not be decided merely according to the legal claims of the various candidates. The vast empire of Spain could not be disposed of merely on principles which decide the devolution of a private inheritance. Behind all personal claims, behind all legal rights, behind even all national policy, loomed the greater principles of the balance of power and the freedom of commerce. If the interests and the rights of France could not permit the union of the Spanish inheritance with the power of Austria, if the interests and the rights of the House of Habsburg could no less permit the annexation of the empire of Spain by the power of France, neither Germany nor England nor the United Provinces could in the interests of Europe permit either the one or the other. But if Europe was going to claim her right to be heard, if claims of descent and of legal rights were to be subordinated to the general good of the European family of civilised nations, the maritime nations would assuredly demand their share in the commerce of the Spanish Indies as the United Provinces would insist upon their barrier against the aggression of France, and Austria the security of its hold upon Italy.

With his usual diplomatic foresight Louis XIV. had grasped the situation as long ago as the period of the war of Devolution. At that time Charles II. was young and as yet unmarried. It

was quite possible that in spite of the weakness of his health he might have children born to him before he died. Nevertheless his death might occur at any moment, and Louis with his keen eye to the future determined to be ready for all emergencies. He at once recognised the improbability of being able to annex for himself or his house the whole of the Spanish dominions, and accordingly decided to try and obtain by negotiation with the only other serious candidate then in the field—the Emperor Leopold—that part of the inheritance which was of most value to France. His policy was completely successful, and on the 19th of January 1668 he concluded with the Emperor a secret treaty for the partition of the Spanish dominions, after the death of Charles II. without heirs, by which the Emperor was to have Spain and the Indies and the Milanese, and France the Netherlands, Franche Comté, Navarre, Naples, Sicily and Catalonia. In the thirty years which elapsed between the partition treaty of 1668 and the peace of Ryswick much had happened. Louis had already annexed Franche Comté, and become master of so much of the Spanish Netherlands as to give France a safe and defensible frontier. The Netherlands were no longer of the same value to France as they were in 1668, while their acquisition was much more difficult. Since 1668 the United Provinces, through their successful resistance to Louis in the Dutch war of 1672 and in the war of the League of Augsburg, and through their close alliance with England since 1688, were far more formidable antagonists. Louis knew well that they would fight to the death rather than permit him to break down the barrier of the Spanish power in the Netherlands, which alone kept the Scheldt closed and Amsterdam safe. At the same time the maritime powers, as we have seen, had ambitions of their own in the direction of the Spanish and Mediterranean trade, which would prevent them from acquiescing without a struggle in the rule of France at Naples, or her ascendency in Spanish waters.

The Partition Treaty of 1668.

Changes in Europe since 1668.

The problem therefore had increased in difficulty since 1668. New interests had to be consulted if diplomacy was to try her hand at a settlement. A long and sanguinary war, which could not fail to embrace all Europe in its terrible folds, was absolutely certain if things were left to take their chance. Who could tell what the results of such a war might be? Both Louis and William had reached an age when statesmen do not willingly set fire to the house on the chance of carrying off some valuables in the confusion. It was madness to think that France could gain more even by a successful war than she had gained by diplomacy in the treaty of 1668. So when the treaty of Ryswick was signed and Europe was once more at peace, Louis sent his friend the Comte de Tallard to London, on a special mission, to submit to William III. a project for the partition of the Spanish monarchy when the moribund king had breathed his last.

Adoption by Louis of a policy of Partition.

Tallard found William III. discouraging, and his friend and confidant the duke of Portland almost hostile. They were naturally suspicious of gifts which came from so pronounced an enemy as Louis XIV. They were astonished at the boldness, not to say the rashness, of the proposal to parcel out the dominions of Charles II. in his lifetime. But the more William thought over the idea the more feasible it seemed. Heinsius, the grand pensionary of Holland, was by no means opposed to it on principle, though he doubted whether the interested parties could ever come to an agreement on the details. William found the people of England so distrustful of him, so suspicious of his designs, so hostile to his advisers, so determined to deprive him of his army, and fetter him by poverty, that he did not dare to reckon on their support should he call upon them again to follow him in a crusade against France. In March 1698 he authorised Portland, who was at Versailles, to invite Louis to lay his proposals for a treaty before him. In so doing he not only expressed his willingness to enter into

Mistrust of William III. and Heinsius.

negotiations with a view to the partition of the Spanish dominions, but also his determination not to consider himself bound any longer by the clause in the League of Augsburg negotiated in 1688, by which he had pledged himself to recognise and enforce the claims of the Emperor upon the whole inheritance.

In April 1698 the negotiations for a partition treaty between France, England and the United Provinces were fairly launched. When once begun they proceeded briskly enough. Did they seem to be flagging, the news of a relapse in the health of Charles II. would set them again feverishly at work. Yet the business owing to its delicate character and many ramifications took a long time to finish. It was not till the September of that year, after five months of incessant negotiations, that Louis could feel sure that his efforts would be crowned with success. During that time the despatches show Louis to have constantly been the active agent in the discussions. William and Heinsius played mainly a passive part. It was theirs to criticise, to accept or to reject what Louis proposed. But as the negotiations continued it is pleasant to see how the desire for peace and agreement grew stronger and stronger, how confidence succeeded to suspicion, and frankness of mind to mistrust. Never did Louis show his great mastery over the foreign politics of Europe in clearer light than in these negotiations. Throughout, his is the master mind. Tallard but played the part of his eyes and ears and mouth in England. William, though quick and clever at seeing the drift of a suggestion, fixed his eyes too closely upon the national interests of the maritime nations to take so broad a view of the whole as that which illuminated the mind of Louis.

Progress of the negotiations.

At first Louis overrated this tendency of William's diplomacy. He thought that if he was ready to give ample security for the safety of the United Provinces behind their barrier of the Netherlands, and for the security of English

trade in the Mediterranean, he could procure Spain and the Indies for his grandson. But he quickly found out his mistake, and he fell back upon two principles of action which determined his policy in the whole question from first to last as long as the negotiations lasted. The first was to guard against the revival of the power of the Austro-Spanish House through the succession question. The second was to neutralise the increase of the influence of the Habsburgs, by making the frontiers of France strong, not merely for defence but for offence. In pursuit of the first principle he opposed himself vigorously to the recognition of the archduke Charles as king of Spain, and when through the force of circumstances he was obliged to give way on that point, he did so only on condition that the connection between Spain and Austria through north Italy was cut by the granting of the Milanese to an independent prince, and rendered liable to annihilation by France through her acquisition of the Tuscan ports and Finale. Louis was not going to see the chain of the Austro-Spanish power, which it had cost Henry IV. and Richelieu so much to break, once more woven round her by the arts of diplomacy and the accidents of life. In pursuit of the second principle he took care, that if his grandson could not rule at Madrid, his own armies might have a way easily open to their advance thither by his acquisition of Guipuscoa; while he made his eastern frontier secure by the annexation of Lorraine, and strove hard to make it dangerous by his claim upon Luxemburg.

Objects of Louis's diplomacy.

These two principles regulated the diplomacy of France throughout the negotiations for both the partition treaties. Neither of them were necessarily antagonistic to the chief interests of England and the United Provinces. To England the all-important matter was to detach Louis from the support of the House of Stuart, and so to secure the maintenance of the principles of the Revolution. To the United Provinces the possession of a secure barrier against French aggression and the opening of

Objects of William and Heinsius.

the Scheldt was an essential condition of national existence. To both the maritime powers the duty of preventing France from obtaining the monopoly of trade in Spanish American waters seemed of paramount importance, while the opportunity of obtaining a share in the trade for themselves was one which it was worth running some risk to secure. Both sides were therefore in their heart of hearts more anxious to guard against dangers than to obtain positive increase of power. They were more eager to prevent their enemies from gaining a preponderance than to secure preponderance for themselves. Here lay the secret both of the success and of the dilatoriness of the negotiations. William and Heinsius were easily convinced of the desirableness of a treaty for settling the succession of Spain before Charles II. died. They were attracted by the evident good faith and conciliatory attitude of Louis. They soon found that they had no cause to fear for the security of the barrier of the United Provinces or of the succession in England. The real difficulty lay in providing for the Dauphin such an inheritance as would secure France against the revival of the power of the Austro-Spanish House, and yet would not threaten the trade interests of the maritime powers in the Mediterranean and the Spanish American waters. But that was after all a matter of detail which was certain to be settled, although it might take a long time to settle it. The great object of Louis was to prevent an Austrian succession. The great object of William and Heinsius was to prevent a French succession. Directly both sides were convinced of their mutual interest and each others' good faith the success of the treaty was assured.

Fortunately in the Electoral Prince of Bavaria there was a candidate whose advancement to the throne of Spain would satisfy all the conditions required. Neither French nor Austrian by birth and only five years of age, he could be dangerous to neither party either through his territorial influence or personal abilities, while he was likely to be more popular than either of the other

The first Partition Treaty, 1698.

candidates in Spain itself, because owing to his tender years he could be educated as a Spaniard. In July 1698 it was agreed that Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands should go to the Electoral Prince. More than two months were spent in the discussion of the inheritance of the Dauphin. Eventually, on the 10th of October 1698, the first partition treaty was signed. It provided that the Electoral Prince of Bavaria was to receive Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands. The archduke Charles was to have the Milanese and Luxemburg, and the Dauphin Naples, Sicily,[1] the Tuscan ports, Finale, Guipuscoa, S. Sebastian, and Fuentarabia. On the news of the treaty oozing out at Madrid, Charles II., though very angry, determined to make the best of the position, executed a will in favour of the Electoral Prince, giving him the whole inheritance, and sent for him to Spain in order that he might be educated there in accordance with the traditions of the Spanish court.

All seemed now settled. It was true that the Emperor was not likely tamely to acquiesce in the rebuff which had been dealt to his claims, and that the pride of the Spaniards would urge them to fight to the last rather than submit to the enforced partition of their splendid empire. It was probable that the inhabitants of Naples and Sicily would not readily see their long connection with the crown of Spain rudely severed at the dictates of the northern powers. France would have to conquer her inheritance with the sword. But there was little reason to fear that Spain, under the government of a regency, with a foreign boy king at her head, in her exhausted and bankrupt condition, could seriously resist the armies of France and the navies of the maritime powers. And what substantial assistance could the Emperor render with the Bavarians opposed to him on the Danube and the French masters of the sea? Louis knew the sluggish, calculating mind of Leopold too well not to be

Likelihood of its success.

[1] The Tuscan Ports comprised Santo Stéphano, Porto Ercole, Orbitello, Porto Longone, Talamone, and Piombino.

persuaded that he would soon accept the inevitable, and set himself diligently to profit by the opportunities which the possession of the Milanese gave him in Italy. Venice lay open to him an easy prey. Ascendency in north Italy and the harbour of Venice was more practically useful to the land-locked and poverty-stricken House of Austria than a shadowy and precarious empire beyond the seas. The contracting powers might have to enforce the treaty by war, but the struggle would not be general and could not be prolonged.

Suddenly this fair prospect was marred by an unexpected and tragic blow. On the 6th of February 1699 the Electoral Prince died of smallpox, and the labours of five weary months were dissipated like a bubble in the air. Without a moment's hesitation, without wasting a minute in unavailing regrets, the indefatigable Louis took up again the web of diplomacy which had for the moment dropped from his hands, and instructed Tallard to negotiate for a new treaty. The matter was much more complicated than heretofore, the details much more difficult to arrange. There was no third candidate now equally suitable to both parties. The duke of Savoy, who was suggested by Tallard, was as objectionable to William and Heinsius as the elector of Bavaria, who was suggested by William, was to Louis. It soon became clear that the archduke Charles was the only candidate for the crown of Spain and the Indies whom England and the United Provinces would accept. They even refused to listen to the suggestion that the Dauphin ought to have part of the share of the deceased prince. Why should the Dauphin profit, said William, by the death of the Electoral Prince? Louis saw that he must yield if the treaty was to be made. He fell back upon the principles of national consolidation and frontier development, and bent all his energies to obtain for France such a position as would enable her to neutralise the increased power of the Austro-Spanish House.

Death of the Electoral Prince, 1699.

The negotiations renewed.

He urged strongly that if the Netherlands must go to the archduke, France at least ought to receive compensation in Luxemburg, and that if the Austrian House was to be permitted to add Spain to its dominions he at least might recover the kingdom of Navarre. It was all to no purpose. William and Heinsius refused absolutely to allow Louis to turn the barrier of the Netherlands by the annexation of Luxemburg, or to give his armies a shorter road to Madrid than had been already opened to them by the first treaty. Again Louis saw that he must yield, and in May 1699 the second Partition Treaty was agreed to between Louis, William, and Heinsius. By this treaty Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands fell to the archduke Charles, the Dauphin received the Milanese, in addition to the share allotted to him by the first treaty, but on condition that he should exchange it for Lorraine with the duke of that country, and annex Lorraine finally to the crown of France. It was further provided by secret articles that the archduke Charles should not be permitted to visit Spain until the Emperor had accepted the Partition Treaty, and that if the Emperor did not accept the treaty before a given date, and the king of Spain before his death, the archduke should forfeit his rights under the treaty, and his share should be given to such prince as the contracting parties might choose.

The second Partition Treaty, 1699.

This treaty was on the face of it more unfavourable to France than the preceding one, and it may well be a matter of surprise at first sight that Louis was prepared to make such great sacrifices in order to obtain it. To seat the archduke Charles on the throne of Spain, while his brother Joseph ruled at Vienna, was a strange termination to the policy of one whose life had been spent in determined antagonism to the House of Habsburg. Yet on consideration it will be seen that the objections to the treaty from the French point of view were more apparent than real. Spain was in such a disorganised condition that it was impossible for her to count among

Value of the treaty to France.

the powers of the world. Her resources were great, but they neither were nor could be developed without capital. Of capital available for such a purpose neither Austria nor Spain had the worth of a dollar. The revenues barely paid for the expenses of the court in either country. Even ambassadors had not enough for the expenses of their household. Important as Spain would soon become if annexed to energetic and prosperous France, she could not but remain a nonentity when joined to sluggish and bankrupt Austria. But that was not all. France was relieved of all serious rivalry on the side of Spain for many years by the disorganisation of the Spanish and imperial finances. She was placed in a position of absolute superiority to Spain by her acquisitions in Italy. The possession of Naples and Sicily made her mistress of the Mediterranean. No communications could pass, no troops could be sent from Austria to Spain, without running the blockade of the French fleet in the Gulf of Lyons. No army could ever reach a port of embarkation without the consent of the duke of Lorraine or the republic of Venice. The gift of the Milanese to the duke of Lorraine completed the policy of Richelieu in 1625. It closed the Valtelline to the armies of the Austro-Spanish power. Were the duke to forget his associations with France, or remember them only too well, and side with her enemy, French troops from the ports of Tuscany and Finale could reach Milan before a German lance flashed in the Valtelline, and French ships could blockade the harbours of Genoa and Savoy at the first note of danger. Even during the war of the Spanish Succession, when English ships rode triumphantly in the Gulf of Lyons, when the imperial armies held Milan, and Genoa was friendly, it was found by no means easy to victual or reinforce the archduke's troops from Germany. It would have been an absolute impossibility had France been undisputed mistress of the sea.

The enormous advantage gained by Louis XIV. by a simple alliance with the maritime powers, even if it only neutralised

their opposition instead of securing their support, has hardly been sufficiently appreciated by historians. The Austro-Spanish power was left by the Partition Treaties huge in bulk but impotent through division. It consisted of four great masses all dependent upon one another, but unable to communicate with each other, except with the permission of foreign powers. The gold of the Indies was necessary for the payment of the very officials of the Madrid court and government, yet how could Spain pretend to guard her treasure-ships from the united fleets of England and France? The Netherlands depended for their governors and their armies upon Spain. What chance of escaping capture would a Spanish fleet of reinforcements have as it beat up the narrow channel in sight of the coasts of Kent and Picardy? Austria and Spain could not assist one another without first obtaining the mastery in the Mediterranean, and the Netherlands could only communicate with Vienna by permission of the princes of Germany. Had the Partition Treaty been carried out France would have become at a stroke, without bloodshed, incontestably the dominant power in Europe, liable only to be deposed from her pride of place by the rupture of the alliance with the maritime powers, and for that very reason the maritime powers would have held the fate of the world in their hands.

Advantages of an alliance with the maritime powers.

Louis XIV. thoroughly grasped the situation. He fully understood the immense importance of securing the friendship of the maritime powers, the absolute necessity of avoiding their hostility. It was for this reason that he laboured so long and patiently for the success of the policy of partition, that he repressed so strenuously the eager desire of Harcourt, his ambassador at Madrid, to intrigue for the whole inheritance, that he made concession after concession rather than break off the negotiations for a treaty. William and Heinsius were less far-sighted and more suspicious, yet they too were not unaware of the greatness of the position in Europe which an

Reception of the treaty by the contracting powers.

alliance with France would give them. But the people of England and the republican party in the United Provinces were too narrow in mind and bigoted in spirit to recognise anything of the sort. Absurdly fearful for their trade interests, and venomously hostile to the person of William III., they opposed the Partition Treaty blindly because he had made it, and because France had allied with him to make it. There was hardly a man in England outside the little foreign cabal of the court who was in favour of it. Even Somers, the staunchest of Whigs and a devoted adherent of William, when after much doubt he consented to permit it to be sealed with the great seal, only ventured to say that it would doubtless become popular in England if it brought with it a large share of the Spanish-American trade. Fortunately for William England was powerless to stop it, for all foreign negotiations were then wholly under the control of the king, but the Amsterdam traders fought hard and long to prevent its acceptance by the States-General. They insulted Louis by demanding that it should be registered by the Parlement de Paris, and he was actually forced to consent that it should be placed among the archives of that body. It was not till April 1700 that the treaty was at last signed by the three contracting parties and the ratifications exchanged.

The agreement of the maritime powers and France with reference to the disposition of the Spanish dominions after the death of Charles II. was a great step towards the maintenance of the peace of Europe, but it did not guarantee it. It was necessary to procure the assent of the chief powers of Europe to the treaty before it was certain that it could be enforced without bloodshed. Here Louis and William found much less opposition than they had any reason to expect. The duke of Lorraine raised no difficulties as to the exchange of his duchy for the Milanese, the Pope and the republic of Venice agreed to the treaty in June. Their adhesion was most important, for Venice held the gates of the passes through the Alps to Austria, and the

Its reception by Europe.

Pope could block the way to the march of armies to and from Naples. Besides, the opinion of the head of the Catholic world might not unreasonably do much to induce the Spanish court to accept the treaty. Less difficulty still was experienced in Germany. Prussia, now just become a kingdom, signed the treaty in order to gain recognition of her new dignity, the rest of the German princes signed as a protest against the recent creation of the electorate of Hanover.

By the autumn the adhesion of the king of Portugal left the king of Spain, the Emperor, and the duke of Savoy the only important powers of Europe which had not accepted the treaty. Victor Amadeus of Savoy was playing the part traditional in his house. He knew that among the projects present to the mind of Louis was that of exchanging the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily for Savoy and Piedmont. Should war eventually break out between France and Austria his alliance would be of the utmost value to Louis, in enabling him to support the operations of his fleet by the occupation of Milan. Should the Emperor wish to convey his son secretly to Spain he would find the numerous ports of Savoy the most available for his purpose. Convinced of his importance he determined to bide his time and sell himself to the highest bidder. Before long he found that he had miscalculated his chances and lost his market. The Emperor could not bring himself to renounce one jot or tittle of the inheritance which he claimed as his due. Though he received under the treaty far more than he was likely to win by war, though the treaty might easily be described as a diplomatic victory over his rival France, though he had willingly concluded a partition treaty thirty-two years before, which was less favourable than the present, though he knew not where to turn for a florin or look for an ally, nevertheless with the patient stubbornness characteristic of his race, he set himself to obstruct the treaty by delay and defeat it by intrigue. Though he never gave a definite refusal he never really for one moment intended to give an

Opposition of Savoy.

Opposition of the Emperor.

acceptance. His hopes were bent upon obtaining a will in favour of the archduke from Charles II. by means of the influence of the queen, Marie of Neuburg, the sister of the Empress.

For the moment the interest of the struggle veered to the bedside of the dying king. As the autumn sped on there could no longer be any doubt that the end of that troubled life was at hand. All remedies had been tried, but had proved unavailing. The angel of death would not surrender his victim to the revolting mixtures of quack doctors, or the superstitious delusions of monkish exorcists. One duty remained to be performed by Charles ere he quitted the world in which he had lived so wearily. He had to choose, as far as the power of choice was left to him, the successor to his throne. If he chose wrongly he might plunge all Europe into a desolating war and bring his country to absolute ruin. The choice was by no means an easy one nor did his advisers make it easier for him. The Spanish people and Charles himself were united on the great principle of doing all that they could to maintain the integrity of the empire, but they differed as to the means to be adopted to achieve this end. Angry as Charles was at the news of the first Partition Treaty, he accepted it so far as to make a will in favour of the Electoral Prince, and he sent for the young prince in order to educate him in Spain as his heir. The act was popular, for both he and his people believed, no doubt rightly, that the Electoral Prince had a better chance than any other candidate of uniting the whole of the Spanish dominions under himself. But on the death of the prince it became very difficult to decide between the representatives of the Dauphin and of the Emperor. If the Emperor was the weaker, he was the nearer by the traditional ties of policy and of race. But was not France the only power in Europe strong enough to seize and keep the whole inheritance from the hand of the spoiler? It was a hard choice for a moribund king to have to make in his last days of extreme physical and mental weakness.

Events at Madrid.

Gradually it became clearer to those who watched by the bedside that personal influence could alone decide his wavering will. Within the palace the queen was paramount, and she, after some little vacillation, had decided to support the archduke strenuously. Outside the palace the feeling was all in favour of France. It grew in intensity as the conviction spread that the Emperor by himself could never defeat a partition treaty. It was fanned by the news that the Pope had pronounced that a decision in favour of France would not be contrary to the interests of the Church. Even the report of the signature of the Partition Treaty did not stem the advancing tide, for with a willing self-deception the Spaniards ascribed it entirely to the hated Dutchman. The national party determined on a palace revolution. The cardinal Porto Carrero, archbishop of Toledo, accompanied by a few religious established himself in the sick-room, and refused to allow the queen or any of the adherents of the archduke to enter. He represented to Charles that a will in favour of France was the only way to avoid civil war and a partition of the monarchy. The king freed from the ascendency of his wife gave a tardy assent. On the 7th of October 1700 he signed the will. 'It is God alone,' he said as the pen dropped from his nerveless hands, 'who gives kingdoms, for to Him alone they belong.' The next day a speedy messenger hurried from Blécourt, Harcourt's successor, to Paris to acquaint Louis with what had happened. Three weeks afterwards, on the 1st of November, the poor king's troubles were over, and the last of the line of Arragon was gathered to his fathers. When the will was opened it was found that the whole inheritance of the crown of Spain was given to Philip duke of Anjou, the second son of the Dauphin, and in the event of his death to his younger brother the duc de Berri. If Philip refused to accept the inheritance, the right to it was to pass wholly to the archduke Charles.

Palace intrigues and revolution.

Signature of a will in favour of France, 1700.

For fifteen days all Europe hung breathless in suspense.

What would Louis do? The unexpected, if not the unhoped-for, had happened. Harcourt, the able and showy ambassador of France at Madrid, had always maintained that in the end a will in favour of France could certainly be obtained, and Louis, without ever forbidding them, had always quietly put his suggestions aside, and pushed on with all his skill the policy of a partition. And now Harcourt had proved to be right and Louis wrong. The whole of the prize was open to his grasp did he choose to stretch forth his hand and take it. Louis was sorely perplexed. For perhaps the first time in his life he did not see his way clear. His advisers were divided, some of them greatly in doubt. Tallard urged him strongly to keep faith with Europe and maintain the Partition Treaty. Torcy was of the same opinion at first. Beauvilliers was more emphatic even than Tallard. For the moment their advice prevailed, and it was decided to send an envoy to Heinsius to assure him of the good faith of France. But the message was never sent. The wishes of Madame de Maintenon, the earnest remonstrances of the Dauphin, who refused to see his son disinherited without a struggle, reasserted themselves. The feeling of the French court was strongly in favour of a bold policy. Torcy altered his mind as he reflected more carefully upon the state of Europe. The Dauphin insisted with renewed energy on the rights of his son. At last the decision could be put off no longer. The Spanish ambassador reached Paris with the text of the will and required an answer. If it was unfavourable, he was to go straight to Vienna. On the 16th of November a council was called at Versailles to pronounce a final decision. The courtiers assembled in the great gallery of the palace in unprecedented numbers, for even the most frivolous among them could not but feel the unique gravity of the crisis. The minutes and the hours sped on, the excitement grew more vivid, the strain more intense. At last the great folding doors were thrown open, and as every

The problem before Louis.

Acceptance of the will.

one bowed low to the ground Louis was seen leaning affectionately on the shoulder of his grandson. Advancing to the edge of the daïs with that kingly dignity which was to him a second nature, he said in clear and deliberate accents, which penetrated to the furthest corners of the vast hall, *Messieurs, voici le roi d'Espagne!*

Political reasons for its acceptance.

The die was cast. What is to be said of the gamester who staked—and lost—his all on the throw? If moral considerations may for the moment be put on one side, honesty and good faith laid on the shelf, no one can doubt that Louis was right. The interests of his country and the interests of his family demanded at that particular juncture of affairs the acceptance of the will. The difficulties attending the enforcement of the Partition Treaty, in spite of the favour with which the powers of Europe had received it were enormous. To impose the archduke Charles upon Spain by French bayonets, while all Spain and half France was loudly demanding the duke of Anjou was an impossibility. To permit the archduke to establish himself in Spain by means of Austrian troops, before he and his father had accepted the treaty, was too dangerous to be thought of. To act upon the secret article, declare the rights of the archduke forfeited, and give Spain and the Indies to some third person, was to commit a greater outrage than ever upon the pride of Spain and the claims of the Emperor, and to ensure the outbreak of war. The determination of the Emperor to resist a treaty which gave him the lion's share of the spoil made it impossible to enforce it in its entirety when Charles II. was dead. The contracting powers might, it is true, have executed it as far as was possible. They might have effected the conquest of Naples and Sicily for the Dauphin, and handed over the Milanese to the duke of Lorraine. They might have administered Spain and the Netherlands until a decision was eventually arrived at. But to do these things they would have incurred as large an expenditure of both men and money as would have been

entailed by open war, and they would not have avoided open war with the Emperor. To execute the treaty in its entirety was impossible, to execute it partially was costly and dangerous.

To accept the will, on the contrary, presented difficulties comparatively slight. Such a course guaranteed the loyal support of Spain. It did not necessarily involve the active hostility of the Emperor. There was no reason to think that Prussia or the princes of Germany would attach sufficient importance to the principle of the balance of power in Europe, as to incur on its behalf the risks and responsibilities of war. Danger only threatened from the maritime powers, but however deeply William and Heinsius might feel, however bitterly they might resent, his conduct, Louis well knew that they were powerless to act. In both countries the Partition Treaty was more unpopular than the will in favour of France. The English people fully realised that, as long as they kept out of continental complications, their liberties were safe, their control over their king secure. If once they allowed him to involve their interests with those of the Dutch, they thereby put into his hands military and naval power which he could use to make himself independent of Parliament. All the Tories and many of the Whigs were resolute against allowing a standing army on principle, or conniving at it in fact. They cared far more about keeping their own king weak, than they did about preventing Louis from becoming strong. As William bitterly admitted in his letters to Heinsius: 'I am troubled to the very bottom of my soul to find now that the business has become public, that nearly everybody congratulates himself that France has preferred the will to the treaty, insisting that it is much better for England and for the whole of Europe. . . . People here are perfectly unconcerned, and turn their thoughts but little to the great change which is happening in the affairs of the world. It seems as if it was a punishment of heaven that this nation should be so little alive to that which passes outside of its own island, although it ought to have

Remoteness of the dangers of war.

the same interests and the same anxieties as the continental nations.'

Indifference of England and Holland.

William did not conceal from himself the fact that to induce England to declare war against Louis XIV., because of his repudiation of the Partition Treaty and his acceptance of the will of Charles II., was wholly out of the question. He had to content himself with urging the Emperor not to recognise the duke of Anjou, and with endeavouring to gain time. Heinsius was in a similar plight. The republican party were overjoyed at the failure of the Partition Treaty. The citizens of Amsterdam, in their delight at the defeat of the House of Orange, would not hear of any possible dangers to their trade or their barrier. It was doubtful if the States-General could be induced to declare war in alliance with England, it was certain they would not do so by themselves. As far as purely political dangers were concerned Louis might accept the will in perfect security. Not a protest was made, not a murmur was openly heard. Louis thought he might go a step further. In February 1701 he occupied the frontier towns of the Netherlands, took captive the Dutch garrisons which they contained, and restored the towns to the government of the elector of Bavaria, Max Emanuel, who had been appointed by the Spanish government to that charge. To regain their troops the Dutch recognised the duke of Anjou as king of Spain. William held out longer, but at last he was obliged to submit to the pressure of his ministers. In April 1701 England too recognised Philip V., and Louis had for the moment the satisfaction of seeing that he had calculated the chances rightly, and had placed his grandson on the throne of Spain without striking a blow, or involving France in war. Philip himself was received at Madrid with the liveliest expressions of joy and enthusiasm. The grandiloquent boast had come true, *Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées.*

Their recognition of Philip V.

But at what cost had this result been achieved? Never

since Richelieu had first launched France on her career of territorial aggrandisement, never since sovereigns had consciously or unconsciously adopted the principles of Macchiavelli in their dealings with one another, had any act so deliberately dishonourable been done as the repudiation of the Partition Treaty by Louis XIV. Honesty, public faith, private honour, were words of no meaning in international relations, if kings might make treaties one day and break them the next, because it happened to be to their advantage to do so. Push the principle but a little further, and European nations would be once more in a state of pure savagery, for civilisation and progress depend upon contract, and what contract is possible among nations when public faith is dead? If might is right, treaties and bargains are not merely useless but hypocritical. If ever there was a case in which a sovereign ought to have stuck to the bargain which he had made, it was that of Louis XIV. in relation to the Partition Treaty. The treaty was essentially his own handiwork. It was he who had first suggested it. For two years he had urged it, worked for it, made sacrifices for it. At his instance it had been published to the world and accepted by Europe. He was identified with it farmore than were William and Heinsius. For him to repudiate his own offspring, because his calculations proved wrong, was to deal a blow at the public morality of Europe from which it took years to recover. His conduct was as plainly unjustifiable in morals as it was advantageous in politics. And no one knew this better than Louis himself. The arguments which he instructed Tallard to advance to William on his behalf, and all the arguments which his apologists have addressed to the world since in his justification, are arguments against the making of a partition treaty, not in favour of its repudiation. They may prove that Louis was foolish to make a treaty, they do not prove that he was right to tear it up directly it was made. They are arguments which Louis had himself discounted when he began the negotiations, and had himself

Louis guilty of a deliberate breach of faith.

answered, as far as they admitted of an answer, in his earlier instructions to Tallard. It is true that he could not actually have been certain that the Emperor would refuse to accept the treaty, and undoubtedly the fact of his refusal very seriously diminished the chances of the ultimate success of the policy of partition, but it was a contingency highly to be expected, and had as a matter of fact been most carefully provided for in the treaty itself.

Not guilty of a deeply laid plan of deception.

But among English historians there has been a tendency to make Louis out more culpable than he really was. The whole negotiations for a Partition Treaty have been depicted as an elaborate deception intended to hoodwink the eyes of the maritime powers until the intrigue in Spain should be successful and the will in favour of the duke of Anjou procured. Harcourt at Madrid is described as carrying out the real policy of Louis, while Tallard at London is purposely his dupe, in order that he may with the greater honesty make William and Heinsius his dupes too. The drama is one in which unexampled villainy is everywhere triumphant, dull virtue oppressed and deceived, and retribution lamely limps along full thirteen years behind. Such a theory is opposed both to the facts of history and the limitations of human nature. To keep up a deception planned on such a gigantic scale for two years and a half, without accomplice, or confidant, in the face and to the disadvantage of the ablest intellects of Europe, most of whom were penetrated by suspicion and eager for revenge, is beyond the powers of human villainy and opposed to all that we know of Louis's character. Louis had often played the hypocrite and broken faith before, but he had done it pompously in the face of Europe with a show of bravado. He had claimed the Netherlands by the law of devolution, and parts of Alsace by virtue of the decisions of the Chambres des Réunions, by sheer audacity not by cunning. He had often been a bully, there is nothing in his long reign, except perhaps his conduct to Fouquet, which could justify the faintest suspicion that he was

an accomplished dissembler before whom even Louis XI. must bow the knee. For what does the theory involve? It involves the belief that for two years and a half he was deceiving not merely William and Heinsius, the Emperor, and the king of Spain, but his own most trusted emissaries and friends. He was deceiving Torcy his foreign minister, Tallard his ambassador in London, and Harcourt his ambassador at Madrid. He was to the last assuring the very man, through whose efforts alone he could obtain the whole succession, that he had determined on a different policy; and he was doing this, not in public letters which might see the light, but in his own secret correspondence, which was often sent by special messenger and never went through the foreign office at all. Further he must have carried out this wholesale deception with an elaboration at which the mind sinks back appalled. He wrote hundreds of letters in great detail, held a large number of conferences with his council as a whole, and with individuals by themselves, made numerous speeches to ambassadors, held many and long interviews with Lord Jersey and other envoys, and yet never once in the whole period said or did anything to suggest the slightest suspicion of his good faith! And more than that. He overacted his part terribly. If his real object was to amuse the maritime powers, while his intrigue in Spain was maturing, his obvious course was so to manage the negotiations for the Partition Treaty, as to give as little trouble as possible to himself without exciting the suspicions of William. But on the contrary his private correspondence with Tallard shows that he continually gave himself infinite and unnecessary trouble. His mind was fixed upon the possibilities of the negotiations. He sets out his views at great length on every turn of the diplomatic game. It is he who is continually urging haste, especially when the news of the king of Spain's health gets more unsatisfactory, the very time when, if he was not in earnest, he might have rested upon his oars without danger. He continued the policy of partition, after he knew that in consequence of it Charles II.

had made a will in favour of the Electoral Prince, and that France had become very unpopular in Spain. He even permitted Harcourt to leave Madrid months before Porto Carrero effected his palace revolution, and when all probabilities pointed to a will in favour of the archduke made at the dictation of the queen. Such conduct would have been sheer folly had Louis not been actuated by honest motives.

Consistent policy of Louis.

In the face of these facts can any one doubt that the negotiations for the Partition Treaties were conducted by Louis in good faith? The principles on which he acted, if not strictly honourable, were far less dishonourable than it has been the fashion to assert. This policy stands out clear in his private letters to Harcourt and to Tallard. It is consistent throughout and intelligible. He never swerved from the opinion that Europe would not permit him to acquire the whole inheritance for his family. He never thought it probable that Charles II. could be induced to make a will in favour of France. Under these circumstances, his obvious policy was to prevent Austria from gaining the whole inheritance, or so much of it as would threaten the ascendency of France in Europe. The best, if not the only way of securing this without involving Europe in war, was by means of the old device of a partition treaty. But it was always possible, if not probable, that the negotiations for a partition would fail, and Louis accordingly left Harcourt free to act as he thought best in his interests until the Partition Treaty was an accomplished fact. Directly the treaty had been concluded, Harcourt was recalled, and placed at the head of the army on the frontier. He was no longer wanted to push the interests of France at the court of Charles II. The time for diplomacy was over, that for action had come, and his services were required to prevent the archduke from coming into Spain in contravention of the treaty. But the unexpected happened. Louis found himself the possessor of the whole inheritance, at a moment when his knowledge of Europe told him that it was more than probable that he could

successfuly seize the prize without bloodshed. The temptation was too great, and after a sincere hesitation of some weeks, he turned his back on the policy of the last three years and deliberately broke faith with his allies.

Whatever may have been the motives, the policy of Louis XIV. seemed crowned with success by the spring of 1701. His grandson sat secure upon the throne of Spain, amid the enthusiasm of his people, without a single declared enemy, though it was known that the Emperor was arming. The expulsion of the Dutch from the frontier fortresses placed the Netherlands at the disposal of France. The recognition of Philip V. by the maritime powers seemed to guarantee the peace of Europe in spite of the preparations of the Emperor. None knew better than Louis that the storm was not averted, because for the moment there reigned an ominous calm. It required the most careful and wary tread to avoid the pitfalls open on all sides of him. With or without allies the Emperor would probably declare war. William and Heinsius were working hard to urge the English and the Dutch to action. 'The only game to play with this nation,' wrote the king to his confidant, 'is to engage them in war without their knowing it.' The princes of Germany were certain to join an alliance against France, were it once set on foot, provided that they received plenty of money and incurred but little risk. Prussia was too nearly interested in the lower Rhineland to stand aloof. Never was it more necessary for Louis to display that spirit of conciliation of which he at times was apt to boast. All his address, all his self-restraint was needed successfully to smooth difficulties, to allay suspicion, to calm prejudice. If one strong power besides the Emperor determined to draw the sword, the fiery cross would run riot over Europe in a moment. Already there had been indications that Tory England and republican Holland had fixed limits to their indifference. Instructions were given to William by the Parliament of 1701 to take such measures as might be needful

Difficulties in the way of Louis.

for the protection of the Dutch. A point might be reached at which distrust of Louis XIV. would get the better of distrust of William III. If the king of France wanted to keep the advantages which he had gained, without running the risks of war, it was essential that he should not excite the suspicions of the English and Dutch.

His aggressive conduct.

With a strange infatuation Louis adopted exactly the opposite policy. He formally declared that the rights of the duke of Anjou to the French crown were in no way impaired by the fact of his succession to the throne of Spain, and early in 1701 he expelled the Dutch troops from the fortresses garrisoned by them in the Spanish Netherlands, and replaced them by French soldiers. He refused to entertain any proposals whatever for granting compensation to the Emperor out of the dominions of Spain, or security to the Dutch by giving them a fortress barrier. He issued commercial decrees which pointed plainly to the exclusion of English and Dutch ships from the Spanish-American trade, and completed the tale of arrogance and blindness by a deliberate and unpardonable violation of the treaty of Ryswick. On the death of the exiled James II. of England in September 1701, Louis recognised his son James, the Chevalier de St. George, as the rightful king of England. The blunder soon brought its own punishment. Louis had succeeded in doing what William with all his craft could never have done. He had inspired all Englishmen, both Whigs and Tories, with an enthusiastic determination to fight. Flouted in her national pride, threatened in her commercial interests, directly attacked in her liberties and independence, England joined willingly with the Dutch and the Emperor to bring the haughty tyrant of Europe to his knees. In the winter of 1701-2 the Grand Alliance was concluded between England, the Emperor, the Dutch, the king of Prussia, and the grand duke of Hesse, with the object of destroying the tyranny of Louis XIV. and breaking up the Franco-Spanish monarchy by giving

Formation of the Grand Alliance, 1701.

Italy to the Emperor, and the Indies to the maritime powers.

The conclusion of the Grand Alliance was the last act permitted to William in the lifelong struggle which he had carried on with the French king. In March 1702 he died, but his spirit still continued to animate the nation. His successor Anne, Tory though she was by conviction, threw herself heartily into his policy under the influence of her friend and favourite the duchess of Marlborough. In May 1702 war was declared and Louis found himself once more face to face with indignant Europe.

Death of William III., 1702.

CHAPTER XV

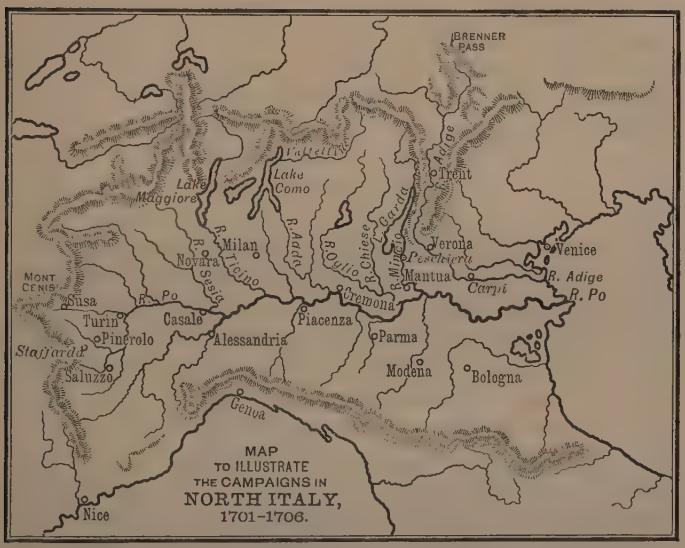
THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION AND THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV.

The campaign of Prince Eugene in Italy—Appointment of Marlborough to the command in the Netherlands—His character and abilities—He establishes himself upon the Rhine—Advance of the French upon Vienna—Savoy joins the Grand Alliance—Critical position of the Emperor—The campaign and battle of Blenheim—The English gain the command of the Mediterranean—Death of the Emperor Leopold—The campaign and battle of Ramillies—Expedition of the Archduke Charles to Spain—The battle of Almanza—The campaign and battle of Oudenarde—Siege and capture of Lille—Negotiations for peace—Appeal of Louis to his people—The campaign and battle of Malplaquet—Dismissal of Marlborough—Victories of the Spaniards over the Allies—The negotiations at Gertruydenberg—The peace of Utrecht—Its policy and justification—The end of the seventeenth century—The death of Louis XIV.

THE war broke out in Italy. By a treaty concluded with the duke of Savoy in the spring of 1701 the road to north Italy was opened to the soldiers of France, and Catinat at the head of 40,000 men occupied the Milanese. Pushing forward his advanced guard to the frontiers of the territories of Venice at the Largo di Garda, he prepared to fall upon the Austrian army as it debouched into the plain from the passes of the mountains. To an invader who comes from Austria or the east, the plain of north Italy presents serious military difficulties. His path to the south is blocked by the strong and deep stream of the Po, which, with its surrounding marshes, treacherous banks, and swift currents, forms an almost impassable obstacle in the face of an active enemy; especially as the most important points of its course

Campaign of prince Eugene in Italy, 1701.

are defended by the fortresses of Alessandria, Piacenza, and Mantua. From the Alps on the north descend into the Po a series of rivers, similar in character though less in volume, each of which forms, both from the nature of its stream, and the cities which command it, a strategical position very easy to



defend and exceedingly difficult to attack directly. From the Lago Maggiore runs the stream of the Ticino joining the Po a little below Pavia. From the Valtelline through the Lago di Como the Adda pours its waters into the Po at Cremona, passing a little to the east of Milan. To the east of the Adda, from the mountains of Bergamo, flows the stream of the Oglio, receiving on its way to its home in the Po the waters of a tributary which protects the important city of Brescia. Further to the east, from the southern end of the Lago di Garda, close to the fortress of Peschiera, the Mincio makes its way directly into the Po below Mantua. A few miles further, from the wide valley leading to the Brenner pass, descends the

great stream of the Adige, which, running through the dominions of Venice, passing the fortresses of Verona, Legnago and Carpi, makes its own way into the sea north of the Po amid impassable marshes. Invaders of the Milanese from Germany and Austria must therefore either force the positions of these rivers one by one in the face of the enemy, or turn them by thrusting their way through the mountains on the north. Catinat had made up his mind that the Austrians would attempt the latter feat, and was carefully watching the mountain valleys north of the Lago di Garda, when prince Eugene suddenly appeared behind him at Brescia. Quickly descending the valley of the Adige he had not scrupled to violate Venetian territory. Marching behind Verona he crossed the Adige at Carpi, then turning north-west crossed the Mincio above Mantua without opposition, and appeared between Peschiera and Brescia, in the rear of the French, before Catinat knew that he had left the obscurity of the mountains. The French had only just time to beat a hasty retreat to the Oglio and cover Milan.

Louis was highly indignant at this ominous beginning to the war, and sent his friend and courtier Villeroy to supersede Catinat. The change was not to his advantage. Villeroy was a good dancer but an indifferent general. Having an army far outnumbering that of prince Eugene, he crossed the Oglio and attacked him on the 1st of September 1701 at Chiari, but was repulsed. Acquiescing in his failure he took up a position on the Oglio defending Milan, and placed his headquarters at Cremona for the winter, where he amused himself in all security

Defeat and capture of Villeroy, 1702.

Prince Eugene saw his opportunity. From Mantua, which he was besieging, he advanced in February 1702, surprised Cremona under cover of night, captured the French general and his staff, and obliged his army to retire behind the Adda. The results of this bold stroke were quickly seen. The dukes of Modena and Guastalla joined the imperialists, the duke of Savoy began to trim, and to look out for an opportunity of

changing sides. But reinforcements soon came to the French. The duke of Vendôme and Philip v. left Naples and appeared on the flank of prince Eugene in Lombardy in August 1702. Greatly outnumbered, the Austrians had to fall back to a defensive position behind the Adige, where the French did not dare to attack them.

Meanwhile the war had become general. In May 1702 Marlborough, who had been appointed to the chief command of the English forces by Anne, and had been elected captain general of the Dutch forces by the states-general, took command of the allied army in the Netherlands. He had under him about 10,000 English troops, about 20,000 Dutch troops, and about as many mercenaries, chiefly Germans, in the pay of England and the United Provinces. It is interesting to notice how small the body of purely British soldiers was who fought in the armies of Marlborough. They were never as numerous as the mercenaries, though they increased in numbers regularly as the war went on. At the commencement of hostilities, owing no doubt to the great jealousy of a standing army evinced by all Englishmen, and to the national distrust of William III., there were very few English soldiers fit to take the field against the veterans of France.

Marlborough appointed to the command in the Netherlands.

What England lost through want of training among her soldiers was more than made up to her by the eminent capacity of her general. Marlborough had learned his first lessons of war in the school of Turenne, he had shown his talents for command in his successful management of an expedition to the south of Ireland in 1689, but no one could have anticipated from his past, when he was appointed to the supreme command in 1702, the singular combination of qualities which made him incomparably the first man in Europe. Full of resource, gifted with a notable mastery over men, and thoroughly trained in the science of war, he is one of the few generals who have had the power of conceiving and executing combined movements on a large scale. His provident

His military qualities.

eye could take in the whole of Europe as a theatre of operations, and direct the movements of four or five armies to a common end. As a strategist, he was too seldom permitted freedom of action for his originality and resourcefulness fully to display themselves. In this he must be compared, not with Frederick the Great or Napoleon or Moltke, but with Wellington or Turenne, and he need not fear the result. Even when driven by the timidity and unreasonableness of the Dutch, or by political danger at home into the commonplace, his campaigns show a grasp of the proportion of things, which is only found in the highest order of intellects. He fixes with lightning rapidity upon the important thing to be done, and sees at once how best to do it with the resources at his command. He never fritters away his strength, he never wastes life,[1] or runs risks unnecessarily, or for mere effect. He strikes directly at the key of the position, his combinations are all aimed at the central point of the enemies' power. In this capacity to appreciate exactly the ratio of his strength and resources to those of the enemy, he strongly resembles his great successor Wellington. Like him he never lost a battle, unlike him he never failed in a campaign. The same characteristics are observable in the battle-field. He had an extraordinarily quick eye for the weak point in an enemy's position, and saw at once how best to utilise the opportunities which the ground afforded for attaining his object. At Blenheim and at Ramillies, it was his skilful use of difficult ground that mainly contributed to the victory. And when his real attack was developed, he showed something of Napoleon's power of combining the whole strength

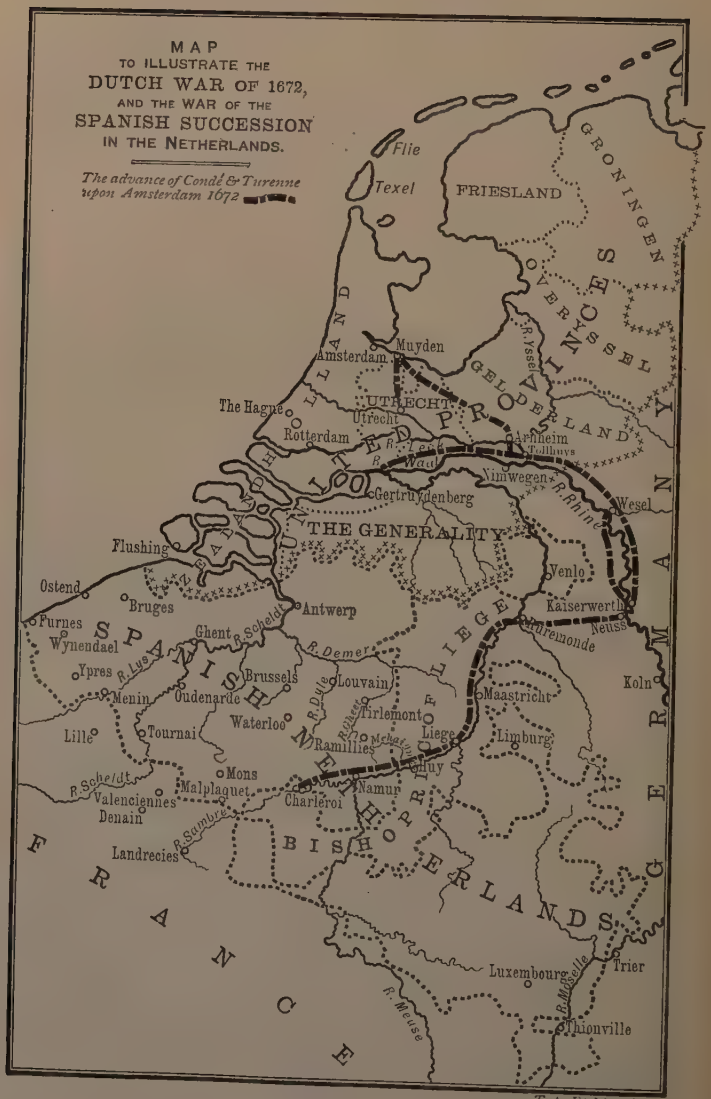
[1] It is sometimes said that he fought Malplaquet, and wasted life unnecessarily there, in order to restore his waning popularity in England, but it must be remembered that in 1709, Mons was the last of the first-class fortresses belonging to the French, and the army of Villars and Boufflers the only real obstacle between Marlborough and Paris. Can any one doubt that had Marlborough been well supported in England, the allies would have been in Paris in 1710?

of his army upon the end to be achieved. At Blenheim he forced his way through the centre of his adversaries' position, and reduced the enemy from a disciplined army into disorganised masses at a stroke, much as Napoleon did afterwards by Soult's famous attack at Austerlitz. But apart from his military genius, he was no less conspicuous for his powers of diplomacy, and his singular management of men. Of unwearied patience, imperturbable temper, and immovable resolution he rarely failed to gain his end in the long run. The Grand Alliance of 1701-2, and the negotiations with Charles XII. of Sweden at Altranstadt in 1708, are undeniable proofs of his diplomatic ability. His close friendship with prince Eugene and Godolphin, and his tender love for his imperious and fretful wife, attest the warmth of his affections, and the amiableness of his disposition. The wonderful self-command with which he saw his best plans ruined, his reputation endangered, his motives suspected, his very successes decried, by the stupidity of the half envious and half timid Dutch, and the malignancy of English party spirit, is no mean tribute to the steadfastness of his patriotism. If France had not the resources of the allies upon which to draw, neither had she their divisions and quarrels with which to contend.

His character.

When Marlborough took command of the allied armies in the Netherlands in 1702, it was clear to him, that the danger to the cause of the allies generally lay in the isolation of Austria. Cut off from the sea, she could not be directly assisted by the English and Dutch fleets. Accessible from Italy through the passes of Tirol, she might easily be taken in flank should she receive a repulse in that quarter. On the side of the Rhine the danger was not only threatening, but imminent. Bavaria was about to make common cause with Louis, and a united French and Bavarian force might be at the gates of Vienna long before tardy succours could force their way there from north Germany or the Netherlands. It was therefore all-important to Marlborough to gain

Dangerous isolation of Austria, 1702.



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command of the lower Rhine valley, so as to be able to open up communications with the imperial troops on the upper Rhine or upper Danube if necessary. But in the way of this policy there were considerable difficulties. The Netherlands formed one vast intrenched camp in the hands of the French. Behind the curtain of their fortresses they could make their preparations in secret for a sudden advance upon Amsterdam, or recruit their armies after a repulse. Boufflers at the head of the French forces occupied a line which stretched from Antwerp on the Scheldt, through Venlo on the Meuse, to Kaiserwerth on the Rhine, thus blocking the three river valleys. If driven from that by a front attack, he had but to retire on the line of the Demer, between Antwerp and Liége, or a little further back to the line of the Mehaigne from Antwerp through Louvain and Tirlemont to Namur, or further back still to the line of the frontier, and take refuge under the great fortresses of Lille, Tournai, Mons, Charleroi and Namur. To force these positions one after another, and capture the fortresses which defended them, in the face of a watchful and valiant enemy, was a task of much difficulty, and must take many years. To try and turn the fortresses by advancing on France by the valleys of the Rhine and the Moselle was sure to be bitterly opposed by the Dutch, whose timidity already pictured the French at the gates of Amsterdam. Marlborough had therefore to act very cautiously. He took advantage of Boufflers's too extended position, and directed an attack as if to turn his left in Brabant. Boufflers fell into the trap, moved his troops in all haste to defend his left, and so gave his right flank over into the enemies' hands. Marlborough easily turned his right flank between the Meuse and the Rhine, drove him back on the line of the Mehaigne, and established himself strongly on the valleys of the Meuse and the Rhine, capturing Venlo, Ruremonde, and Liége.

Marlborough gains a footing on the Rhine, 1702.

The next year he prepared to push his success further. Instructing the Dutch to advance on the right wing into

Flanders, capture Antwerp, and seize the line of the Scheldt, he with the left wing pushed down the Rhine, overran the electorate of Köln, and in May 1703 made himself master of Bonn. He was now secure of his communications with north Germany, and was preparing to organise a German army to operate upon the Moselle, and keep up communications between himself and the Emperor, when he was recalled to the Netherlands in hot haste to assist the Dutch. Tired of waiting for the siege train and transport necessary to form the siege of Antwerp, the Dutch had begun to send out detachments into Flanders for pure plundering purposes. One of these under Opdam was suddenly attacked by Boufflers, and completely destroyed in June 1703. Whereupon the Dutch, in the extremity of terror, absolutely refused to undertake the siege of Antwerp at all. On Marlborough's arrival Boufflers withdrew behind the lines of the Mehaigne, which he had carefully fortified by ramparts and towers. Marlborough, sure of his ability to force the lines, made preparations for the attack, but the Dutch declined to co-operate, and the English general, baffled and dispirited, was obliged to content himself with the capture of a few inferior fortresses.

His indecisive campaign of 1703.

Meanwhile on the upper Rhine things were going badly for the allies. Louis had always intended to make his main attack in this quarter. His plan included a simultaneous advance upon Vienna by the Danube and by Italy, with the help of the duke of Savoy and the elector of Bavaria, while Boufflers in the Netherlands merely kept the English and the Dutch army occupied and entangled amid fortresses and fortifications. The success of prince Eugene in Italy, and his own want of preparation delayed for some time the commencement of this movement, but by the beginning of the year 1703 all was ready. Vendôme was facing prince Eugene upon the Adige ready to attack. The elector of Bavaria had definitely declared himself on the French side and captured

Advance of the French upon Vienna, 1703.

Ulm. Accordingly in February 1703 Villars crossed the Rhine at Strasburg, took Kehl by storm, forced the passes of the Black Forest, and joined the elector on the Danube; while Tallard at the head of another army on the Rhine supported his movements, and protected his communications with France. Prince Louis of Baden, and count Stirum, who commanded the allied forces, unable to make head against the enemy, withdrew into the lines of Stolhofen, a little below Kehl, which they had carefully fortified in order to form a base of operations for the imperial armies on the upper Rhine, and there kept Tallard at bay. The Emperor was in terrible straits. The Hungarians had risen under Ragotsky, and were preparing to attack Vienna from the east. Vendôme was pushing prince Eugene slowly before him over the Brenner pass to Innsbruck. The only other Austrian force was cooped up behind Stolhofen. There was not a man between the elector and Vienna, and Villars strongly urged Max Emanuel to march at once with all his forces on Vienna, and end the war at a blow, while he posted himself on the Danube at Donauwörth, and defended Bavaria from a flank attack.

Unfortunately for himself and his ally the elector had not the required energy. The opportunity passed never to return. Max Emanuel determined to crush prince Eugene first. In June he was at Kufstein on his way to Innsbruck, while Vendôme had penetrated up the pass as far as Trent. The army of Eugene was entangled in the mountains between them. He owed his preservation to fortune, not to skill. Just at this moment Victor Amadeus of Savoy, after hesitating some months, made up his mind that the winning side would be that of the allies. He joined the Grand Alliance, and Vendôme had to hasten back to Piedmont to preserve his communications. The elector hearing of the retreat of Vendôme, dared not face Eugene by himself in such a country, and began to retire. The Tirolese at once rose on

Savoy joins the Grand Alliance, 1703.

behalf of their much-loved master, and Max Emanuel had to fight his way back to Bavaria as best he could. He found Villars defending himself with difficulty against prince Louis of Baden and Stirum. On the arrival of the elector before Augsburg, prince Louis left Stirum and marched to Augsburg, hoping to raise the siege, but Villars was too quick for him. Falling upon Stirum he defeated him completely at Höchstadt on the 20th of September, and drove him back on Nuremberg. Prince Louis had at once to retire to the lines of Stolhofen, and Augsburg fell into the hands of the elector.

Dangerous position of the Emperor, 1704.

For the moment the Emperor was safe. The year was too far advanced to permit of a combined movement upon Vienna. But it was clear to all parties that the attempt would be made in the next campaign. It seemed equally certain that if made it must succeed, unless Marlborough and the army of the Netherlands could come to the rescue. Louis made great preparations for the effort. Villars, whose arrogance was displeasing to the elector, was recalled and sent to the Cevennes, where the remnants of the Huguenots had risen under the name of the Camisards. His place was taken by Marsin, and his army strongly reinforced. The plan of campaign was simple. Marsin and the elector were to march straight upon Vienna down the Danube, while Ragotsky attacked the city from the side of Hungary. Tallard, at the head of 35,000 men, was posted in Alsace to support the movement, preserve the communications, and defend the army from any flank attack. Villeroy, with 30,000 men, was sent to the Netherlands to keep Marlborough at bay and prevent him from coming to the rescue. Against this overwhelming force Austria could only oppose the armies of prince Louis of Baden, and prince Eugene. If the Emperor was to be saved, it must be by Marlborough, and how could Marlborough leave the Netherlands without throwing open the United Provinces to invasion? Was it

likely that the Dutch would endanger their own safety for the sake of the Emperor? Even if they did, was it possible to escape the combined attack of the armies of Tallard and Marsin and the elector when the Danube was reached?

These were the questions to which Marlborough was preparing to give an answer in the summer of 1704. He had conceived the brilliant plan of moving the whole of his army, except the Dutch, from the field of operations in the Netherlands to a totally new base upon the upper Danube, and of crushing Marsin and the elector before Tallard could come to their help from the Rhine, or Villeroy overtake him from the Meuse. It was a scheme which was certain to fail except in the hands of a consummate general, for it involved not merely a victory over equal and possibly superior forces, but a long and extremely hazardous flank march over difficult country, and a race against time. And that was not all, for before he could even undertake it, he had to deceive the Dutch and lull Villeroy into a false security. If the Dutch once suspected that he was going to move his army away from the protection of their frontier, they would impose an energetic and decided veto. If Villeroy once divined that Marlborough was engaged in making a long march up the Rhine, he could ruin the whole plan in a moment by a well-directed flank attack. To surmount these difficulties, Marlborough, keeping his real plan an absolute secret, let it be generally known that he intended to try and turn the lines and fortresses of the Netherlands, by advancing into France by way of the Moselle, and he publicly asked for, and obtained, the permission of the Dutch to that scheme. This enabled him to summon the Brandenburg contingent to the Rhine at Mainz, and to move his own headquarters to Coblentz without incurring suspicion, and to leave Overkirk with the Dutch army and the Dutch deputies at Maestricht on his extreme right, to guard the line of the Meuse should Villeroy advance on Amsterdam during his absence. The plan succeeded admirably. Villeroy, completely deceived, took up a

Plan of Marlborough.

strong position on the upper Moselle near Trier to resist the advance of the allies, and waited in vain for the first signs of the invading army. The Dutch left behind at Maestricht could not interfere with Marlborough's plans. All was ready.[1] In June 1704 he threw off the mask, advanced up the Rhine by forced marches to Mainz, then, picking up the Brandenburg contingent as he went, he left the Rhine and directed his army straight upon the upper Danube at Donauwörth. At Heilbronn he was joined by a German force, and near Ulm by prince Eugene and prince Louis of Baden. It was agreed that Eugene should return to Stolhofen to prevent Tallard, and possibly Villeroy if he appeared upon the scene, from coming to the assistance of the elector and Marsin before the allies could attack them. Marlborough himself and prince Louis of Baden marched straight against the elector, who had entrenched himself on the Schellenberg near Donauwörth, carried the lines by assault on the 2d of July and drove the elector back on Augsburg, thus thrusting themselves in between the French and Vienna and completely protecting the latter city.

His flank march to the Danube.

So far the campaign had been brilliantly successful, but the most difficult part was yet to come. Villeroy on discovering the trick played upon him by Marlborough marched across Alsace and joined Tallard before Stolhofen with 30,000 men. This enabled Tallard to leave prince Eugene to the care of Villeroy, and to march to the assistance of Marsin and the elector, whom he joined at Augsburg early in August. Counting the army of Villeroy, the French and Bavarians far outnumbered the allies. Marlborough himself was a long distance from his true base of operations. He had no fortress or entrenched camps where he could collect stores, establish his hospitals, or recruit his army. It was essential to his safety to be able to strike hard and quick. Fortunately for him the French played into his hands. Marsin and Tallard were anxious to have the

Difficulties of Marlborough.

[1] See Map, p. 241.

sole credit of crushing this impudent Englishman. They would not wait for Villeroy. They would not hear of Fabian tactics. They determined to destroy him at a blow, and marched down the Danube to meet him. Prince Eugene, who had abandoned Stolhofen in pursuit of Tallard, effected his junction with Marlborough near Donauwörth on the 11th of August, and on the 13th the two armies found themselves facing each other on the field of Blenheim.

The French generals had taken up a defensive position at right angles to the Danube, just behind the little stream of the Nebel. Tallard at the head of the right wing occupied in force the village of Blenheim, the left wing under Marsin and the elector the village of Lutzingen. The centre was considered sufficiently protected from serious attack by the stream of the Nebel and its adjacent marshes, and was weakly held, chiefly by cavalry. The plan of battle which they had adopted, clearly was to permit the allies to dash themselves in vain against the strong positions of Blenheim and Lutzingen, and when they were exhausted finally to overwhelm them by an advance from the two wings. Marlborough on reconnoitring the ground saw at once that the weakness of their position lay in the centre, and that the marshes were not so impassable as they seemed. Accordingly he instructed prince Eugene to direct a strong attack upon Marsin and the elector at Lutzingen, and Cutts to do the same upon Tallard at Blenheim. Under cover of these assaults he made his real attack on the centre. With some difficulty he succeeded in crossing the marshes, then, thrusting himself in between the two wings of the enemy he completely drove the Maison du Roi off the ground and cut the French line in two. Then turning to the left he hemmed Tallard in at Blenheim between his army and the Danube, and forced him to surrender with all his infantry. Marsin and the elector finding their centre and right wing annihilated fled as best they could through the Black Forest to Villeroy on the Rhine pursued by the fiery Eugene. Never was defeat more complete

The battle of Blenheim.

As the sun set on the field of Blenheim the glory of Louis XIV. departed.

No one can wonder at the outburst of joy which thrilled through England and Europe at the news of the battle of Blenheim. It was felt to be decisive of the main issues of the war.

Its results.

France had other armies in the field and could raise new troops, but she could never replace the loss of her veterans. She could not again tyrannise over Europe. She might win victories, she might defend her frontiers, she might emerge honourably from the contest, but she could no more hope to dictate terms to Europe after Blenheim, than she could a century later after the retreat from Moscow. But Blenheim had not only put a bridle in the mouth of Louis XIV., it had not only destroyed his veteran army, it had not only saved the Emperor from absolute ruin, it had unexpectedly brought to light a new and most important factor among the decisive forces of Europe. The English sailor had been recognised as a formidable power since the days of the Armada, but the English soldier had not had an opportunity of proving his real worth since the fight of Agincourt. Blenheim was as important an event in the history of civilised warfare as Rocroy, not because it gave the death-blow to an antiquated system of tactics, but because it was the birthplace of a new military power of the first class. From Blenheim to Waterloo the English soldier stands out as the best fighting material in Europe, and England takes her place among the first military nations of the world.

The English gain the mastery in the Mediterranean, 1702-1704.

While France was losing her military prestige and superiority at Blenheim she received a humiliating reminder of her inferiority at sea. In 1702 a combined fleet of English and Dutch ships was sent under the command of Sir George Rooke to the coast of Spain, which by a stroke of good luck fell in with the Spanish plate fleet and the French ships which were protecting it in the harbour of Vigo, and after a spirited action completely destroyed them both. Two years afterwards,

in the summer of 1704, Rooke captured the impregnable rock of Gibraltar, and defeated the French fleet which attempted its recovery. This gave England an important position in the Mediterranean, the value of which made itself gradually recognised as the century wore on, and established the superiority of the allies at sea, the effect of which soon resulted in the loss of Italy to the French power. Directly north Italy fell into the hands of the imperialists, as it did after the brilliant campaign of prince Eugene in Italy in 1706, there was no means of keeping up communications between Naples and France. Consequently after the victory of prince Eugene at Turin in 1706 had finally driven the French back behind their own frontier, a revolution broke out at Naples which ended in the total loss of Italy to the French cause.

After the battle of Blenheim the French armies were obliged to act upon the defensive, and the interest of the war turned once more to the Netherlands. In 1705 Marlborough took up in earnest the plan with which he had deceived Villeroy and the Dutch the year before. He arranged with Prince Louis of Baden (for Eugene had returned to his command in Italy), a combined attack upon France by the Moselle and the Saar, in order to turn the defensive fortresses of the Netherlands. But time slipped away, and the allies had not completed their preparations, when in May 1705 the Emperor Leopold died, and the imperial troops were summoned home. All hope of a combined movement had to be abandoned. At the same time Villeroy, who commanded upon the Meuse, moved forward and threatened Liége. Marlborough at once left the Moselle and marched to relieve Liége, and Villeroy retired into the fortified lines of the Mehaigne between Antwerp and Namur, just as Boufflers had done in 1703. But by this time the Dutch had learned to have somewhat more confidence in Marlborough's skill, and he was permitted to attack. Making a feint at the two extremities of the

Death of the Emperor Leopold, 1705.

Marlborough forces the lines of the Mehaigne, 1705.

lines he easily forced them in the centre at Tirlemont, and drove Villeroy back on Louvain and Brussels, thus cutting him off from Namur and his direct communications with France. The marshal took up a position behind the Dyle, which the Dutch thought too strong to be safely attacked in front, and Marlborough moved to the west to turn it and threaten Brussels. To save Brussels the French retired on the city, and stood at bay near the forest of Soignies, on ground which in a little more than a hundred years was to become celebrated for all time as the English position at Waterloo. Marlborough in pursuit took up the ground afterwards occupied by Napoleon and prepared to attack. But Dutch timidity stepped in to prevent this most interesting rehearsal of the last tragedy of the Napoleonic war with the parts reversed. Marlborough was forced to retire when the prey was in his grasp. Deeply chagrined he contemplated leaving the struggle in the Netherlands to the Dutch, and combining his forces with those of the gallant Eugene in Italy, but this was not permitted. He could not be spared as long as Villeroy was unhurt on the Dyle, and Villars held his own upon the Rhine. So in the spring of 1706 he again took command of the army of Flanders and prepared to bring Villeroy to book. That incapable and boastful general was equally anxious to cross swords with the hero of Blenheim. Refusing to wait for the arrival of a reinforcement of 15,000 men under Marsin, who were on their way, he left the line of the Dyle in the spring, and marched towards Namur. On his way Marlborough met him at Ramillies on 23d of May.

Campaign of 1706.

Villeroy had chosen his ground with some skill. His right occupied the village of Tavières, which stood on a slight eminence above the Mehaigne, and was protected by that stream. His centre rested upon the village of Ramillies, which, with the mound called the tumulus of Ottomond behind it, formed the key of the position. His left was defended by the marshes in which the stream of the little Gheet rises. The bulk of his troops

Battle of Ramillies.

were massed at Tavières and Ramillies, and his left being so well defended by the nature of the ground was very weakly held. The quick eye of Marlborough soon detected this defect. He saw too that owing to the nature of the ground within his own position he could move troops from his own right to his centre without being observed by the enemy. On these two facts he based his plan of battle. Early in the morning of the 23d of May he directed a strong and imposing attack against the French left. Villeroy thinking that he was going to force his way over the marshes of the little Gheet, as he had forced his way over the marshes of the Nebel, began to hurry up troops from his centre in hot haste to defend his threatened left. Directly Marlborough saw this movement, he marched the bulk of his troops from his right to his centre under cover of the ground, so that the operation could not be seen by the enemy, merely leaving enough men before the French left to keep Villeroy persuaded that the main attack was still being made in that quarter. When all was prepared he suddenly launched the bulk of his army upon the weakened French centre between Tavières and Ramillies. Tavières was carried by the impetuous rush but the battle was not yet won. The Maison du Roi, mindful of their old fame, and burning to avenge the disgrace of Blenheim, checked the advance of the allies upon Ramillies by repeated and heroic charges. The French infantry hurried back to their old posts from the left, and round the village of Ramillies the battle swayed backwards and forwards for some time. At last the French fell slowly back, the village was won, and the centre of the French position forced. Villeroy gave the signal for a retreat which quickly changed into a rout. His army was destroyed as a fighting force. In rapid succession the chief towns of the Netherlands opened their gates to the victorious allies, and the French were driven back to the line of the frontier fortresses.

The battle of Turin and the battle of Ramillies had reduced France to the line of her frontiers, but in the next year a gleam of success visited the arms of her indefatigable master.

Marlborough was too much occupied with the negotiations at Altranstädt and hampered by the badness of the weather to attempt anything of importance, while on the Rhine Villars succeeded in capturing the lines of Stolhofen and preventing the imperialists from moving. But the best news came from Spain. In the year 1703 through the exertions of Methuen, the English ambassador at Lisbon, a treaty had been negotiated between England and Portugal, which had the effect of making Portugal the devoted political adherent of England for more than a century, and of introducing English statesmen to the too seductive influences of port wine. By the accession of Portugal to the Grand Alliance an opening was made for the archduke Charles to make good his claims to his kingdom. In 1704 he landed at Lisbon with a force of 12,000 English and Dutch troops under Schomberg with the object of invading Spain. The expedition met with little success and Galway replaced Schomberg in 1705. In the same year the English ministry sent the earl of Peterborough at the head of 5000 men to the assistance of the duke of Savoy, but gave him permission to employ himself in Spain if he found an opportunity. Peterborough, who was a man of brilliant imagination and boastful temperament, induced the archduke to trust himself to his guidance. Sailing round the coast of Spain he landed in Catalonia, captured Barcelona, chiefly through the efforts of prince George of Darmstadt in October 1705, and quickly made himself master of Arragon.

Expedition of the Archduke Charles to Spain.

In the following year Galway determined to support the success achieved in Arragon by marching upon Madrid from Portugal. The French armies were engaged in a fruitless siege of Barcelona, and Galway occupied Madrid and proclaimed the archduke Charles as king almost without opposition. But now the political wisdom of the determination of Louis not to force a foreign king upon the Spaniards against their will showed itself. A national opposition to Charles quickly

His power limited to Catalonia.

grew up in 1706, just as it did a century later to Joseph Buonaparte. Wherever the English soldiers were quartered, all was submission. Directly their backs were turned all was opposition. To make things worse disease broke out among the troops, and Galway found it necessary to retire from Madrid and join Charles and Peterborough in Arragon. In the next year he determined to repeat the attempt, and leaving Charles at Barcelona sailed down to Valencia, and marched from there on Madrid. At Almanza he was met by Berwick, who had lately been strongly reinforced from the army of Italy, and was completely crushed. Valencia and Arragon were lost, and the power of Charles limited to the turbulent province of Catalonia. From that time the allies ceased for some years to make any serious efforts to oust Philip v. by force from the throne of Spain. Galway was recalled and Stanhope appointed in his place, but with the exception of the capture of Port Mahon in Minorca in 1708 he was unable to achieve anything of importance. Having failed in open warfare the allies found diplomacy a better weapon with which to effect the retirement of Philip v.

Great efforts of Louis in 1708.

The security of Spain and the defeat of the imperialists on the Rhine in 1707 nerved Louis to make a great effort in 1708 to recover the ground which he had lost. He fitted out a fleet to land the Chevalier in Scotland and take advantage of the hostility felt to the Act of Union with England, which had been lately passed. He placed one army under Berwick on the Moselle to watch Eugene and the imperialists, while the main force under Vendôme advanced and occupied almost without opposition the great towns of Ghent and Bruges in Flanders, and established itself behind the Scheldt, prepared to move forward when Berwick was ready to co-operate. In July, finding Marlborough still inactive, Vendôme advanced his right wing as far as Mons, and laid siege to Oudenarde in the centre, thus spreading himself out in an extended line over the whole country between Mons and Bruges. Marlborough saw his opportunity.

Sending in haste to Eugene to join him with his cavalry he struck sharply at the centre of the French position. Vendôme at once perceived his mistake and concentrated his army on Oudenarde by a hurried retreat. Marlborough and Eugene followed him with all speed, pushed his rear guard over the Scheldt, and finally forced it to turn and give battle a few miles from Oudenarde on the left bank of the river. The battle did not begin till three o'clock in the afternoon. It was a soldiers' fight. Each regiment as it came up took ground as it best could and engaged. But the allies had the advantage of a single command. The French generals Vendôme and the duke of Burgundy in the excitement and hurry of a disorganised melée gave contradictory orders, and made confusion worse confounded. Eventually Marlborough succeeded in outnumbering the French right, turning it and driving it off the field. That operation put an end to the battle. The French retired on Ghent. Marlborough had succeeded in interposing his army between the French and the frontier. Nothing stood between him and Paris except the great fortresses of the frontier, of which Lille was the greatest. It is said that he wished to neglect that fortress altogether and march straight upon Paris, but the scheme was too bold even for Eugene, considering that Boufflers held the place with 15,000 men and Berwick was at Mons with 30,000. In August the siege was begun. Eugene took charge of the trenches, while Marlborough, posted between the Lys and the Scheldt, protected the convoys coming from Ostend, and prevented Berwick or Vendôme from marching to the assistance of the doomed city. Neither dared to attempt a rescue. They contented themselves with trying to cut off convoys. After an attempt of this sort had been entirely defeated at Wynendaal on September 27th, more by the valour of General Webb than by the skill of Marlborough, Lille could hold out no longer. On the 22nd of October the city surrendered. Vendôme made his way safely to Mons, which with Namur

The battle of Oudenarde, 1708.

Capture of Lille.

now remained the only great fortress in the hands of France. Paris lay open to the advance of the allies.

But just in proportion as the opportunities for a brilliant and decisive campaign were opening out to the allies their ability to take advantage of them was diminishing. In England the strain of the long war was making itself felt in spite of the accessions to her colonies and trade which her supremacy over the sea was daily making. Tory feeling reasserted itself directly the danger to European liberty and English commerce passed away after the battle of Blenheim. No one in England cared one straw whether Bourbon or Habsburg sat on the throne of Spain, as long as the free and peaceful development of Europe and England went quietly on. Within the precincts of the court itself a revolution was in progress, and every courtier knew that the ascendency of the duchess of Marlborough over the mind of Anne was a thing of the past. In this state of affairs Marlborough did not dare to run the risk of a doubtful campaign. In the field he restricted himself to the commonplace. In the cabinet he professed himself willing to listen to suggestions of peace. Louis was overjoyed at the news. France was in a state of extreme exhaustion. Her veteran armies were destroyed, her magazines empty, her generals discredited. The taxes had reached a point beyond which taxation could no further go. Offices were created by the hundred to be sold for what they would fetch. Loans could be raised no longer. The capitation tax was made permanent, and even births marriages and deaths were obliged to contribute to the revenue. To make the misery still more intolerable the terribly severe winter of 1708-9 destroyed the fruit-trees and the vines, and brought the horrors of famine into the fairest districts of France. Early in 1709 negotiations were begun at the Hague, but it soon appeared that the allies were determined not merely to humiliate Louis but to disgrace him. They demanded as a condition precedent to entering on negotiations for a final

Unpopularity of the war in England.

Exhaustion of France.

treaty of peace, that Louis was to surrender Mons and Namur, evacuate Alsace including Strasburg, and force his grandson Philip v. to retire from Spain. The obligation to make war upon his own grandson in the interests of the enemy was more than Louis, dispirited as he was, could with honour accept. He determined to appeal to French patriotism against terms so cruelly unjust. France responded nobly to his call. Men volunteered everywhere to protect the sacred soil of France from the invader. Nobles sent their plate, ladies their jewels, and the peasants their hoarded sous to organise a national army. Never was Louis more truly king and leader of his people than when in the days of his humiliation he sent the last army of France to the front in 1709.

Appeal of Louis to France against the demands of the allies.

Villars was selected as the general to be intrusted with the last hopes of France. He proved himself equal to the responsibility. Carefully entrenching himself in strong positions, while he trained his recruits and collected supplies, he trusted to the great ally Time whom he knew could not fail him. At last as the summer grew on Marlborough and Eugene, not daring to attack him in his camp near Lens, marched upon Mons, and Villars was forced to advance in order to relieve it. He took up an almost impregnable position at Malplaquet, resting his two flanks on wooded heights, and holding the gap in the middle, which he had strongly entrenched, with his main force. There he awaited the onslaught of the allies. There was nothing for it but a front attack. The position, if taken at all, must be taken by a direct assault. On the 11th of September Marlborough and Eugene hurled their troops up the gap. It was not a battle, it was a carnage. Fighting desperately hand-to-hand, the victors of Blenheim and Ramillies at last forced the position. Villars himself was wounded, but Boufflers who succeeded to the command effected his retreat in good order. Mons remained the prize of the conquerors.

Battle of Malplaquet, 1709.

The battle of Malplaquet was more honourable to the

vanquished than to the victors. It did not even re-establish Marlborough's influence in England. In the year in which it was fought the duchess was dismissed from her court appointments. In the following year a definitely Tory and peace ministry was formed under Harley. It was obvious that the dismissal of Marlborough was only a question of time. Determined to run no risk, he contented himself with forcing Villars slowly back into France. At the beginning of 1711 he learned that the ministry had secretly opened negotiations for peace, and he proceeded methodically to drive Villars back from one position to another while awaiting the final blow. Political necessities had entirely superseded military opportunities. At last the blow fell. On December 31st, 1711, he was dismissed from a command which had long ceased to be a reality.

Dismissal of Marlborough, 1711.

Meanwhile in Spain the necessities of Louis actually strengthened the position of Philip v. In 1709 all the French troops were withdrawn to defend their own frontiers. Stanhope and Stahremberg, who commanded the imperialists, accordingly advanced against Philip in 1710, drove him first out of Arragon, then almost out of Castile to Valladolid, and occupied Madrid. The result was a national movement of the Spaniards in favour of their king. Louis allowed Vendôme to take command of the Spanish army. The allies found it impossible to maintain themselves at Madrid, and retreated in two divisions upon Arragon. Vendôme manœuvring with great skill forced himself between them, surrounded Stanhope at Brihuega and obliged him to capitulate, then throwing himself on Stahremberg, routed him at Villa Viciosa, and drove him back to Barcelona. Again the Spaniards had emphatically pronounced their determination that Philip, and none but Philip, should reign over them.

Defeat of the allies in Spain, 1710.

In spite of this the allies were still endeavouring to compel Louis to make war upon his grandson. In the winter of 1709-10 negotiations were resumed at Gertruydenberg. Louis

consented to surrender Alsace, and offered not only to recognise the archduke Charles as king, but to forbid his subjects to serve in Spain, and even to provide supplies for the allied armies in Spain. But the allies were determined to put Louis openly to shame before the face of Europe, and insisted that he should force his grandson to resign the crown. Again the negotiations fell through. They were not renewed. Directly a Tory ministry came into power they opened private communications with Louis without taking their allies into their confidence.

Negotiations of Gertruydenberg.

By September 1711 an agreement was arrived at between France and England alone, and preliminaries of peace settled. These were then communicated to the Dutch and the other allies, and were accepted with some protests by all except the Emperor. In accordance with the preliminaries a congress was held at Utrecht in 1712, and the final peace drawn up there and signed in 1713.

The treaty of Utrecht, 1713.

The Emperor still stubbornly refused to yield. In 1711, that terrible year of mortality among princely houses, Joseph I. had died, and the archduke Charles was now Emperor. His pride would not suffer him to surrender the crown of Spain to his rival, and Eugene was instructed to push on military operations in spite of the defection of the English. Without the aid of Marlborough even Eugene was powerless against the patriotism of France. Beaten at the bridge of Denain by Villars in 1712, he was driven back to the frontier of the Netherlands, and had in consequence of the conclusion of the peace to transfer his army to the upper Rhine. But misfortune pursued him there. In 1713 Villars burst into Alsace, crossed the Rhine at Strasburg, forced Eugene from his entrenched camp at Freiburg, and obliged the Emperor at last to consent to make peace. The definitive treaties were eventually signed at Rastadt and Baden in 1714.

The war continued by the Emperor.

Treaties of Rastadt and Baden.

By the treaties of Utrecht, Rastadt, and Baden, generally grouped together under the name of the Peace of Utrecht, the following arrangements were effected.

Terms of the Peace of Utrecht.

(1) Philip v. was recognised as King of Spain and the Indies, on the condition that the crowns of France and Spain should never be united on the same head.
(2) Naples, the Milanese, Sardinia, and the Netherlands were given to the Emperor, subject to the right of the Dutch to the military government of Furnes, Ypres, Menin, Ghent, Tournai, Mons, Charleroi and Namur as their barrier against France.
(3) France was permitted to retain Alsace including Strasburg, as she had been by the peace of Ryswick, but she had to surrender the fortresses of Kehl, Breisach, and Freiburg, which she had seized on the right bank of the Rhine.
(4) The electors of Köln and Bavaria were restored, the succession of the House of Hanover in England acknowledged, and the Chevalier banished from France.
(5) England received Gibraltar, Minorca, Newfoundland (subject to certain rights of fishing on the banks), Hudson's Bay, Acadia, and S. Kitts, and acquired by an assiento, or agreement, with Spain the right to trade under strict limitations with certain town in Spanish waters set apart for the purpose.
(6) The kingdom of Prussia was recognised and received upper Guelderland.
(7) Sicily and part of the Milanese were given to the duke of Savoy, and the fortifications of Dunkirk were agreed to be demolished.

The peace of Utrecht has been denounced perhaps with greater fervour than any of the great settlements of European affairs, except the treaty of Vienna in 1815. But in these denunciations attention has usually been directed more to the particular interests of nations and parties than to the general welfare of Europe. From this circumscribed point of view much may be said against the treaty itself, and still more against the means which were taken to bring it about. To institute secret negotiations for a private peace, behind the

The peace justly liable to censure.

back of her own allies, was a proceeding most unworthy of England. To leave the Catalans, and the Cevennois, entirely without protection, to the tender mercies of Philip and Louis, after they had been induced to rise against their rulers by the promises and assistance of the allies, was both a crime and a blunder. Who could trust to English faith again? To permit Philip to retain the crown of Spain, and France to keep Alsace, to the detriment of the House of Habsburg, was unfair to the one power which had consistently opposed the supremacy of France, and unfaithful to the pledges of the Grand Alliance. All this is to a certain extent true. After the concessions made by Louis at the Hague and Gertruydenberg, there is no doubt that he would eventually have signed a treaty much more favourable to the Emperor and his supporters than the peace actually made, rather than run the risk of continuing the war. It may be admitted that the Tory ministry made peace as quickly as they could, without much consideration for anybody except themselves, in order to be free from foreign complications when the crisis of the succession should occur at home. Yet from the larger point of view of the welfare of Europe, the peace of Utrecht, like its predecessor the peace of Westphalia, mainly registered and sanctioned accomplished facts. Substantially it ordered Europe for the future on the basis of development at which it had then arrived.

Yet a recognition of existing fact.

Since the last great settlement of the affairs of Europe three great changes had occurred in European politics.

(1) France had acquired beyond all question the position of the leading nation of Europe, and that, not merely through the extension of her frontiers, the splendour of her court, or the ambition of her king; but through the energy and ability of her people, the richness of her soil, and the advantages of her geographical position. A settlement of Europe, which ignored this fact, could not stand for ten years, and the allies

1. It recognised the due position of France.

showed their wisdom in permitting France to retain the position which she had legitimately won, and guarding against her abuse of it by forming states on her frontiers, powerful enough to keep her in check. Events proved that they were right. Austria and the Dutch in combination on the dangerous northern frontier, Prussia and the Empire to the east, Savoy to the south-east, with Austria in reserve in Italy, were as a matter of fact found strong enough to deal with France in the eighteenth century; and it was not until the balance of power and the European states system were alike swept away by the militant democracy of the Revolution, that France became once more a menace to the liberties of Europe.

2. The commercial and maritime supremacy of England.

(2) England had launched herself on that career of colonial and commercial ascendency which has made her the most prosperous country in the world. She was learning to found her colonial empire more upon the conquests of colonies, which France could not support, than upon the efforts of her own children. Her acknowledged superiority at sea, dating from the battle of La Hogue, emphasised by the battle of Vigo, and the capture of Gibraltar and Minorca, might from time to time be questioned by France and Spain, it could never be overthrown, and it brought naturally with it the acquisition of French colonies and Spanish trade privileges. The assiento was the thin end of the wedge by which England soon obtained the lion's share of the lucrative and nefarious slave-trade. The cessions in north America were the beginning of her hold over the vast stretches of land to the north of her plantations, which were to be reduced wholly under her rule during the eighteenth century, and are now known as the Dominion of Canada, and the colony of British Columbia. In securing to England power and privileges, which she alone, owing to her maritime supremacy could properly use, the peace not only helped her forward on her true line of national development, but contributed in no slight degree to add to the resources and prosperity of the world at large.

3. It established European safeguards against France.

(3) The dismemberment of the Empire, which had been recognised and made permanent by the peace of Westphalia, had finally removed the last vestiges of national feeling and national policy in Germany. The smaller German states grouped themselves for purposes of offence or defence naturally around the larger powers of the north and south,—Prussia and Austria. The barrier to French aggression on the Rhine had therefore to be sought, not in bolstering up an effete institution like the Empire, out of which vitality had long ago departed, but in strengthening and utilising the national forces of the two leading powers. The peace of Utrecht adopted this policy as far as was at that time possible. It planted Prussia as a sentinel over against France on the lower Rhine, and added to her possessions in that quarter as well as to her general dignity, in order to make her discharge her duties with the greater zeal. The subsequent history of Europe is one long commentary on the wisdom of this policy. Austria required no incentive to fulfil a similar task in the upper Rhine and in Italy, but she was sadly deficient in the necessary resources. In the last war the gold of England and the armies of England alone had saved her from irretrievable ruin. By giving over to her the richest part of Italy, and defending her from French attack by the buffer state of Savoy, the peace did all that was possible to strengthen the defences of Europe against a renewal of French tyranny, while ministering to the dynastic ambition of the House of Habsburg.

Advantages gained by the peace.

If Europe had no just reason to find fault with the peace of Utrecht from the point of view of her larger interests, neither could the nations themselves complain that their individual aspirations had been unduly neglected. In the Austrian Netherlands, in spite of the grotesque device of the barrier fortresses, the United Provinces gained a protection against the aggression of France and the rivalry of Antwerp, not less efficient

than the Spanish Netherlands had proved to be. By the partial opening of the Spanish trade, and the establishment of a colonial empire by England, the maritime nations obtained the extension of their commerce, which was one of the principal objects which they hoped to gain by taking up arms. Portugal retained its independence and opened up through the Methuen treaty an important and lucrative trade with England. Savoy retained its political importance as a buffer state, and was encouraged to make itself more definitely an Italian power. Prussia was received into the brotherhood of independent monarchies. Even Spain, though she lost the integrity of her empire, was able to retain the king of her own choice. It is here that the provisions of the peace have been most violently assailed, but with little justice. The war of the Spanish Succession was fought, say the critics of the peace, to prevent the House of Bourbon from ascending the throne of Spain, and after eleven years of terrible bloodshed the peace of Utrecht sanctioned the very connection between the two crowns of France and Spain, which the Grand Alliance was formed to render impossible. The family compacts of the eighteenth century are adduced to show the evil effects of such a policy. It may be frankly admitted that the relations between the houses of Habsburg and Bourbon were the least satisfactory parts of the settlements effected at Utrecht, and for the simple reason that they were the most difficult satisfactorily to settle. It might have been possible to impose the archduke Charles upon the Spanish people under the Partition Treaty or at the beginning of the war. It had become impossible in 1712, when the Spaniards themselves had driven him out without French assistance. It was wholly out of the question when after the death of his brother Joseph he had become Emperor. Philip v. was left on the throne of Spain because there was no one else who could be put there. Events soon proved that Austria could not even hold Naples and Sicily against Spain, much less could she conquer her. The weak point in the peace of Utrecht, the danger to Europe

from the family compacts, much exaggerated as it has been, came from a cause over which the negotiations of the peace could have no control whatever—the inherent weakness of the House of Habsburg. The danger to Europe from the family compacts lay not in the fact that France and Spain were intrinsically so much more powerful than Austria, the Milanese and Naples, but in the far greater ability to use their opportunities which distinguished the House of Bourbon and their political advisers.

It is the end of the seventeenth century.

The seventeenth century ends properly speaking with the peace of Utrecht. The earnestness and the ambitions to which it had given birth found in that peace either their accomplishment or their burial-place. The attempt of France to establish a dictatorship over Europe, which has formed the dramatic interest of the century, has failed. France remains but one, and not always the chief, of the nations of Europe. The determination of England on the contrary to attain the commercial leadership of the world, the effort made by Prussia to obtain leadership in Germany, of Austria to obtain command of the left bank of the Danube, and a footing in Italy, have been crowned with success. By the treaties of Passarovitch and Nystädt, which were to follow the peace of Utrecht, as the treaties of Oliva and the Pyrenees followed the peace of Westphalia, Sweden and Poland have to give way to Russia and Prussia in the north, while Turkey stands face to face with Russia on the Pruth and the Black Sea. In the peace of Westphalia the religious rivalries of the century found their appropriate solution. In the treaties of Utrecht and Nystädt the political questions of the century received their appropriate answer. The rivalry between the House of Bourbon and the House of Habsburg for the Rhine was over. The aggrandisement of Prussia, the rise of Russia, the development of England, the failure of Sweden, the decline of the Ottoman Turks, were accomplished facts, recognised and dealt with by the treaties. In the future the great political questions of Europe take a somewhat different

form. As the power of the Austro-Spanish house is finally broken at Utrecht, the Franco-German question begins to take the place of the Franco-Imperial question. As Russia advances to the Pruth, and the Turks retire behind the Danube the Eastern Question takes its rise. As English traders press into every part of the world the old rivalry between France and England breaks out again and again in another 'hundred years war.' But these are the problems of the years which are to come, and as they appear upon the scene the questions of the seventeenth century which have given birth to them pass into history.

Two years were still to drag their weary length along before the greatest figure of the seventeenth century passed away from the struggles and the disappointments of life. They were years of domestic misfortune and public gloom. In the fatal year 1711 the Dauphin and his eldest son, the duke of Burgundy, the much-loved pupil of Fénélon, were carried off by the small-pox. The heir of France was the baby duke of Anjou, and the only legitimate member of the royal family capable of acting as regent was the libertine and atheist Philip of Orléans. As Louis XIV. looked into the future he could see nothing but what he most dreaded for France. As he turned his eyes to the present the picture was one of sombre misery unrelieved. In his despair of being able to make public affairs better, Louis turned in the closing years of his life with almost feverish excitement to the task of atoning for his sins. Urged on by Madame de Maintenon he determined to root out heresy from his dominions while still it was possible. He attacked the Jansenists, procured their condemnation by Pope Clement XI., and destroyed Port Royal, the home of the keenest intellects and perhaps the noblest lives in France. In the middle of this strife of mistaken duty his own call came, and on the 15th of September 1715 the great king breathed his last, leaving a weakly child of five the inheritor of his power. It was

The last years of Louis XIV.

His death, 1715.

a sad and pathetic ending to a career often mistaken, but never ignoble. The sun set indeed amid dark and murky clouds. Yet on the page of history he shines out in clear predominance over all contemporary sovereigns, and of him it may be said, with more truth than of most kings or statesmen, that during a reign extending over more than half a century the motive and inspiration of his every thought and plan was the glory and welfare of his country.

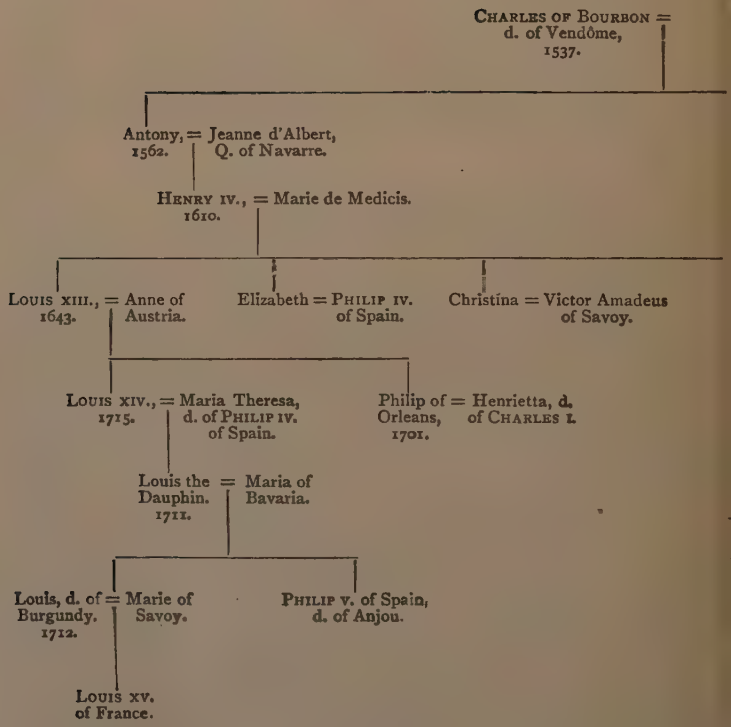
APPENDICES

	England.	France.	The Empire.	Spain.	The Papacy.
1598.	Elizabeth.	Henry IV.	Rudolf II.	Philip III.	Clement VIII
1603.	James I.				
1604.					
1605.	.....	.....	.....	.....	Paul V.
1608.					
1610.	.....	Louis XIII.			
1611.					
1612.	.....	.....	Matthias.		
1617.					
1618.					
1619.	.....	.....	Ferdinand II.		
1621.	.....	.....	.....	Philip IV.	Gregory XV.
1622.					
1623.					
1624.	.....	.....	.....	.....	Urban VIII.
1625.	Charles I.				
1632.					
1637.	.....	.....	Ferdinand III.		
1640.					
1643.	.....	Louis XIV. d. 1715.			
1644.	.....	.....	.....	.....	Innocent X.
1645.					
1648.					
1649.	The Commonwealth.				
1654.					
1655.	.....	.....	.....	.....	Alexander VII.
1658.	.....	.....	Leopold I.		
1660.	Charles II.				
1665.	.....	.....	.....	Charles II.	
1667.	.....	.....	.....	.....	Clement IX.
1670.	.....	.....	.....	.....	Clement X.
1676.	.....	.....	.....	.....	Innocent XI.
1682.					
1685.	James II.				
1687.					
1688.	William III.				
1689.	.....	.....	.....	.....	Alexander VIII
1691.	.....	.....	.....	.....	Innocent XII.
1695.					
1697.					
1699.					
1700.	.....	.....	.....	Philip V. d. 1746.	Clement XI. d. 1724.
1702.	Anne.				
1703.					
1705.	.....	.....	Joseph I.		
1711.	.....	.....	Charles VI. d. 1742.		
1713.					
1714.	George I. d. 1727.				

Brandenburg.	Sweden.	Russia.	Turkey.	Denmark.	
Joachim Frederick.	Sigismond of Poland.	Boris Godunoff.	Mohammed III.	Christian IV.	1598.
			Achmet.	.....	1603.
	Charles IX.	.....	.....	.....	1604.
		The Troublous Times.	.....	.....	1605.
John Sigismond.	.....	.....	.....	.....	1608.
					1610.
	Gustavus Adolphus.	.....	.....	.....	1611.
		Michael Romanoff.	.....	.....	1612.
			Mustapha I.	.....	1617.
			Osman II.	.....	1618.
George William.	.....	.....	.....	.....	1619.
					1621.
			Mustapha I. (restored).	.....	1622.
			Murad IV.	.....	1623.
					1624.
					1625.
	Christina.	.....	.....	.....	1632.
					1637.
Frederick William.	.....	.....	Ibrahim.	.....	1640.
					1643.
					1644.
		Alexis.	.....	.....	1645.
			Mohammed IV.	Frederick III.	1648.
					1649.
	Charles X.	.....	.....	.....	1654.
					1655.
					1658.
	Charles XI.	.....	.....	.....	1660.
					1665.
					1667.
				Christian V.	1670.
		Theodore.	.....	.....	1676.
		Peter and Ivan.	.....	.....	1682.
					1685.
			Suleiman II.	.....	1687.
Frederick III.	.....	.....	.....	.....	1688.
		Peter the Great. d. 1724.	.....	.....	1689.
			Achmet II.	.....	1691.
			Mustapha II.	.....	1695.
	Charles XII. d. 1720.	.....	.....	.....	1697.
				Frederick IV. d. 1730.	1699.
					1700.
					1702.
			Achmet III. deposed 1727.	.....	1703.
					1705.
					1711.
Frederick William. d. 1740.	.....	.....	.....	.....	1713.
					1714.

APPEN

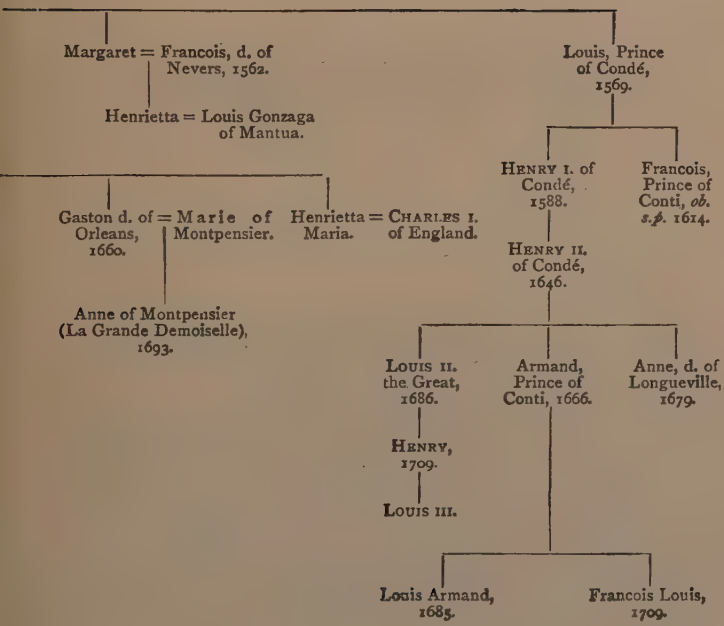
THE HOUSE


Charles of Bourbon = d. of Vendôme, 1537.
Antony, 1562. = Jeanne d'Albert, Q. of Navarre.
Henry iv., 1610. = Marie de Medicis.
Louis xiii., 1643. = Anne of Austria.
Elizabeth = Philip iv. of Spain.
Christina = Victor Amadeus of Savoy.
Louis xiv., 1715. = Maria Theresa, d. of Philip iv. of Spain.
Philip of Orleans, 1701. = Henrietta, d. of Charles i.
Louis the Dauphin. 1711. = Maria of Bavaria.
Louis, d. of Burgundy. 1712. = Marie of Savoy.
Philip v. of Spain, d. of Anjou.
Louis xv. of France.

DIX II.

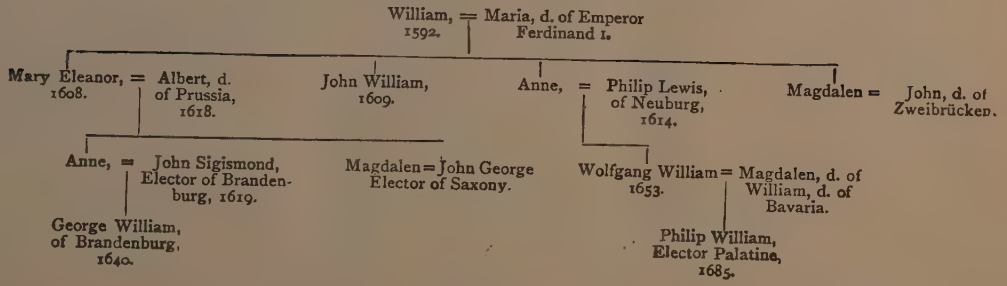
OF BOURBON.

Francoise of Alençon.


Margaret = Francois, d. of Nevers, 1562.
Henrietta = Louis Gonzaga of Mantua.
Louis, Prince of Condé, 1569.
Henry I. of Condé, 1588.
Francois, Prince of Conti, ob. s.p. 1614.
Gaston d. of Orleans, 1660.
= Marie of Montpensier.
Henrietta Maria.
= Charles I. of England.
Henry II. of Condé, 1646.
Anne of Montpensier (La Grande Demoiselle), 1693.
Louis II. the Great, 1686.
Armand, Prince of Conti, 1666.
Anne, d. of Longueville, 1679.
Henry, 1709.
Louis III.
Louis Armand, 1685.
Francois Louis, 1709.

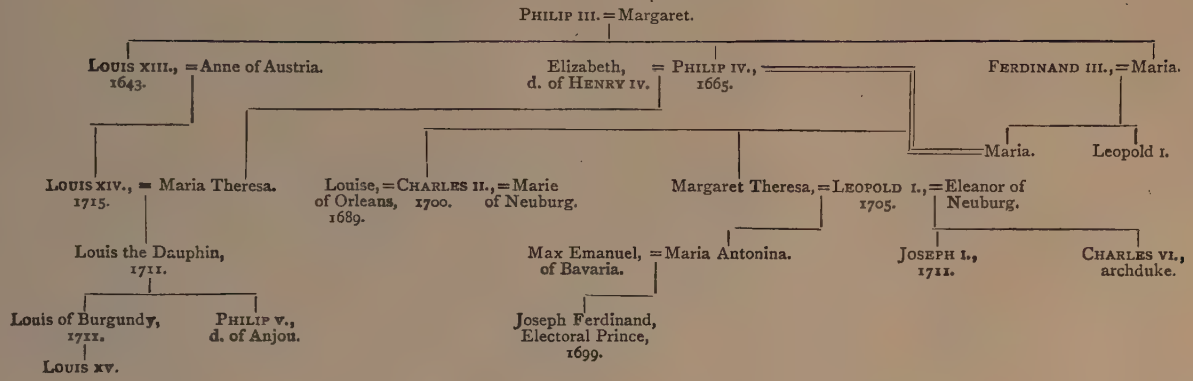
APPENDIX III.

The Succession to Cleves-Jülich.



APPENDIX IV.

The Spanish Succession.


Philip III. = Margaret.
Louis XIII., 1643. = Anne of Austria.
Elizabeth, d. of Henry IV. = Philip IV., 1665.
Ferdinand III., = Maria.
Maria.
Leopold I.
Louis XIV., 1715. = Maria Theresa.
Louise, of Orleans, 1689. = Charles II., 1700. = Marie of Neuburg.
Margaret Theresa, = Leopold I., 1705. = Eleanor of Neuburg.
Louis the Dauphin, 1711.
Max Emanuel, of Bavaria. = Maria Antonina.
Joseph I., 1711.
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